This report is primarily about ICRC's work in the field of humanitarian assistance and promotion of international humanitarian law. Mention is made of some of the operations entered into with a view to providing humanitarian aid to the victims of conflicts and civil wars and international tension. Other negotiations cannot be regarded as being not in the interest of the institution's efforts towards humanitarian aid of the victims of conflicts.

Moreover, the length of the work of the ICRC in a given country or situation is proportional to the magnitude of the problems observed and tackled by the ICRC. However, there are cases which do not fall under humanitarian concern and in which the ICRC is not in a position to render assistance.

In some cases, denied permission to take part, the description of the ICRC's efforts in the field of the problems involved is not possible.

Maps in this report have a significance.

All figures in this report are given in Swiss francs (Sfr). On 31 December 1999, the exchange rate was: Sfr 1.372 to US$ 1.
ANNUAL REPORT
1998

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Nothing would have given me greater pleasure, in presenting the Annual Report for 1998 of the International Committee of the Red Cross, than to have been able to confirm the predictions made at the beginning of the year by those who took an optimistic view of prospects for world affairs, in particular because of the benefits anticipated from the globalization of the economy.

As the following pages, which we have tried to keep factual and objective, demonstrate, it is hard to share that optimism, and this is something I deeply regret. The truth is that 1998, just like previous years, was marked by man's continuing inhumanity to man. Violence, massacres and armed conflicts – virtually all of them, as is the rule these days, occurring within national borders – are still causing untold suffering. And, as usual, it is countless innocent and defenceless civilians who pay the heaviest toll.

There are almost thirty more theatres of armed conflict and crisis in the world now than at the end of the Cold War. The most significant feature of these situations is their unpredictability, which is obliging the ICRC to adopt ever more flexible operational methods. I would cite the outbreak of fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the violence in Guinea-Bissau and Lesotho, and the Indonesian crisis as just a few examples. As for Kosovo, although the hostilities were foreseeable, no one expected them to assume such deadly proportions. Equally striking is the protracted and unyielding nature of these conflicts, not to mention their tendency to spread over entire regions – as for example in Central Africa.

Although it is undeniably important to highlight the number and diversity of conflicts, this alone gives no adequate measure of the extent of the problems facing us. What is most disturbing is not so much the number of conflict situations as the form they take, arising as they do from all manner of irreconcilable claims, obsessions with nationalism and ethnic identity, and an upsurge in every kind of fundamentalism. The aim of belligerents is no longer simply to win the war, but very frequently to annihilate the enemy completely. What we are witnessing, consequently, is a return to a type of all-out warfare characteristic of the darkest periods of history.
Another cause of instability and fragmentation in some already fragile States is the ambition of minorities to achieve independence. As a result, in the space of ten years the number of recognized States has grown from around 140 to more than 190.

This political instability is exacerbated by economic and social problems, which foster violence and create a fertile breeding ground for illegal activities in the guise of organized crime. There is obviously a direct link between poverty and a narrowing of the margin for compromise. Without any doubt, the extreme poverty which is currently affecting whole segments of humanity – and which is increasingly associated with environmental devastation – is the greatest challenge facing the world at the end of the second millennium.

And yet there are some grounds for hope. For example, there is growing recognition that violations of humanitarian law and human rights must not go unpunished. The decision taken in Rome in 1998 to set up an International Criminal Court is an encouraging sign, as are the very large number of ratifications of the Ottawa treaty banning anti-personnel mines.

In all situations where there are human victims, the ICRC – and other organizations – constantly insist that war must not be allowed to destroy their dignity. This type of advocacy will take on special importance in 1999, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the four Geneva Conventions. To mark the occasion the ICRC has decided to give war victims a voice. May that voice be heard by those who have undertaken to comply with international humanitarian law, so that they may clearly demonstrate their resolve, whatever the circumstances, to uphold human dignity.

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. The ICRC's mission is 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 preventative measures by developing and spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law.

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.
MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS
WITHIN THE ICRC IN 1998

In the course of 1998 the ICRC underwent a significant and far-reaching reorganization, based on the results of a two-year study on its future known as the Avenir project. The aim of the project was to strengthen the ICRC's specific identity and to improve its capacity to perform the tasks entrusted to it by the States party to the Geneva Conventions. During the nineties the major upheavals on the global political scene were accompanied by an unprecedented proliferation of new humanitarian organizations working in the field, with aims similar – but not identical – to those of the ICRC. The objectives and methods of warfare also changed; with the increasing involvement of irregular combatants humanitarian workers had to operate in ever more dangerous conditions.

These developments prompted the ICRC to reflect upon its own methods and objectives, with a view to enhancing its ability to respond to the challenges created by the new environment. "Where do we go from here?" was the key question.

The answers ranged from the ethical to the institutional and practical. The basic aim remained the same – to alleviate human suffering in times of conflict – but new means of pursuing that aim had to be devised. As a result, the entire institution was reorganized in a drive to achieve greater efficiency.¹

For instance, to increase synergy between the promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law on the one hand and communication on the other, the previously separate divisions responsible for these activities were merged. The Relief and Health Divisions were also brought together since their aims are the same: to enable conflict victims to survive by providing them with adequate food, housing, water supplies and health care. At the same time, coordinated steps must be taken to help them maintain or regain their self-sufficiency once the emergency phase is over.

Another objective of the new structure is to devolve greater autonomy and responsibility on delegates working in the field, so as to strengthen teamwork and efficiency in ICRC delegations around the world. "Planning for results" is the name given to the new policy governing all action taken both at headquarters and in the field. Its main features are closer definition of humanitarian needs and objectives followed by strict reporting on the action taken and evaluation of the impact of such action.

¹ See pp. 409-411.
Last but not least, the very workings of ICRC headquarters were adapted accordingly. The Assembly, made up of the members of the Committee, remains the supreme governing body for matters of broad policy. The Executive Board has been replaced by an Assembly Council comprising five members of the Assembly and the Director-General. The Directors now meet once a week under the overall guidance of the recently appointed Director-General, and deal with the direct application of objectives and strategies, while the Assembly, together with the Assembly Council, remains responsible for overseeing the ICRC's activities as a whole.

I speak for the entire institution in expressing the hope that this new approach will help us meet the increasing and ever more complex humanitarian needs all over the world.

Paul Grossrieder
Director-General
MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

WITHIN THE USA IN 1989
The ICRC around the world in 1998
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The ICRC's early warning system could have prevented this scene, but when timely access to victims is denied or dry rations don't reach the most vulnerable, community kitchens and feeding centres can save countless lives. In 1998, an estimated 3.8 million people benefited from ICRC programmes.
Operational challenges in 1998

The year under review was marked by a great deal of uncertainty in all spheres of activity. To no one's great surprise, the process of globalization, by over-riding national economies, is having a divisive effect. It is resulting in different rates of development and accentuating disparities within societies, between different regions of the same country and between States. The concept of the Nation State is changing as some States become weakened or fall apart. Formerly the primary, legitimate and sovereign authority over political and economic issues, the State and its role now need to be redefined. Globalization has done away with the already blurred demarcation line between politics and economics. Transnational and global organizations limit the State's sovereignty and capacity to take action, and its legitimacy is frequently challenged by its own population, which cannot identify with the order and values it represents.

Without making value judgements, we have to acknowledge the existence of a two-tier society characterized by growing economic and social problems which are the source of a general upsurge in violence and crime.

The way in which conflict situations develop is also subject to these influences. Although most of today's conflicts are internal and seem to be dominated by local concerns, neighbouring countries, regional powers and economic interests occasionally have a decisive effect on the course they take.

The number of armed conflicts and situations of violence in the world has increased, and it is salutary to bear in mind just how hard it has become to anticipate them. Developments in 1998 give ample proof of this. The most conspicuous feature of these events was their unpredictability, which has obliged the ICRC to adopt a more flexible operational approach so as to respond more effectively to needs. There was no foretelling the Eritrean-Ethiopian war, the violence in Guinea-Bissau, the Indonesian crisis or the all-out attacks on US embassies, which prompted an armed response against Sudan and Afghanistan. As for Kosovo, although a crisis was foreseeable, no one could have predicted the savagery of the conflict.

A further tendency is that of conflicts to engulf whole regions, as in the case of the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo involving several foreign armies as well as an unknown number of armed groups. A similar situation prevails in West Africa, with Sierra Leone as its epicentre. Equally striking is the way hostilities tend to drag on interminably, as in Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan, Colombia and the Caucasus. Lastly, former conflicts such as those in Angola and the Republic of the Congo have, alas, flared up yet again.

Despite the rise in the number of conflicts and theatres of violence, there was no quantitative increase in the ICRC's field operations in 1998. Lack of respect for the rules of international humanitarian law and for the mission of the ICRC, whose task it is to implement those rules in the field, are making it difficult to gain access to victims, either because of political opposition to humanitarian action or because conditions on the ground are far too dangerous.
The proliferation of groups involved in violence, both known and unknown, and the ever greater unpredictability of their goals and methods of operation have complicated the task of assessing and anticipating events that might pose a threat to the security of humanitarian workers, and hence to that of the people needing their help. Whenever possible, the ICRC has adapted its approach and its efforts to reach victims to the constantly changing circumstances.

Indifference or impotence on the part of States, a collective abdication of moral responsibility, the ignorance or opportunism of the media – all these have been cited as factors in the current situation. Unfortunately, globalization is still marked by a kind of egocentrism. This is demonstrated all too clearly by the difference in the degree of political interest shown in certain regions, like the Balkans or the Middle East, as compared with Africa or Asia.

For the ICRC there are no forgotten conflicts, and no "good" or "bad" victims. There are merely human beings in need of protection and assistance. Whether deep in the jungle or in the inner city, in the most hostile or isolated environments imaginable, or in the spotlight of prime-time television, no effort is spared to ensure compliance with the principles governing the conduct of hostilities and respect for victims' rights. To this end, the ICRC seizes every opportunity to initiate a dialogue with all those involved in armed violence.

Although the immunity of non-combatants is a basic principle of both international humanitarian law and customary law, civilians are all too frequently subjected to all manner of atrocities and abuse. The rules relating to respect for the civilian population that are taught to those bearing arms are very often seen as no more than abstract notions with no binding force. Worse still, civilians continue to be deliberately targeted in the most brutal of attacks.

And yet there are too many cases in which the ICRC has remained powerless, either because the authorities have refused to allow it to take action or because its delegates have been threatened or attacked on account of their humanitarian role. In all such instances, the target has been the concept of humanity itself.

Humanitarian action is not immune from the effects of globalization. Issues left unresolved today contain the seeds of future crises which may have direct and severe consequences for countries currently spared the evils of warfare, disaster and underdevelopment. Greater international solidarity is crucial if we are to rise to the humanitarian challenges facing the world today.

Jean-Daniel Tauxe
Director of Operations
One aim, one method

The ICRC's mission is to protect and assist victims of conflict. The notion of protection encompasses any activity that pursues one of the following aims: to protect people who are in a situation of conflict or violence from all the dangers to which they are exposed, to safeguard their rights, to provide them with support and to enable them to make their voices heard.

ICRC delegates work close to the victims of conflict and violence, giving preference to confidential dialogue with the authorities, whether these are States or unofficial bodies. On the basis of data collected in the field and analysed in the light of international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, they take whatever steps are necessary to prevent violations of this body of law, or to put a stop to them. At the same time, the ICRC comes directly to the aid of the populations concerned, providing them with food aid, agricultural or medical assistance and so on.

A diversified strategy

The protection needs of populations in situations of conflict or violence, or individuals deprived of their freedom in these situations, may derive from causes as varied as a deliberate intention to harm them, failure to respect their rights, inadequate training of the security forces, a breakdown in the chain of command and in State institutions, or insufficient resources.

In parallel with the formal representations it makes to the authorities, the ICRC engages in activities such as:

♦ providing assistance to anticipate or meet needs;
♦ restoring and maintaining family links and tracing people who have been reported missing or whose relatives have no news of them;
♦ spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and principles among the police and armed forces;
♦ educational programmes on humanitarian matters for civil society, in cooperation with the local media;
♦ technical or material cooperation with certain prison administrations;
♦ acting as a neutral intermediary.

Generally speaking, there can be respect for human dignity and the rights of the individual only in an environment that is favourable to the prevention and repression of violations of humanitarian law and human rights. Such an environment is possible only where the authorities, civil society, the international community and the various international or intergovernmental organizations concerned are fired by the same determination and combine their efforts. The ICRC’s operational activities contribute to the ongoing construction of this environment.
Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the authorities, whether official or otherwise, to ensure full respect for the rights of the individuals under their control – first and foremost, their right to physical integrity and dignity.

**Protection of the individual requires consultation between humanitarian agencies**

One of the most striking features of the contemporary humanitarian scene is the proliferation of agencies working in the field. This makes it possible to cover many protection needs more fully, with due regard to the specific role of each organization, but it also creates a growing risk of duplication of effort and contradictory messages, and even mutually contradictory projects. Today more than ever before, consultation between all those involved is an ethical, legal and operational necessity, imposed by people’s right to enjoy maximum protection. In 1998, in the context of its relations with the international organizations, the ICRC therefore established closer contacts with other humanitarian agencies in order to ensure better protection. In particular, it encouraged dialogue with nongovernmental organizations with a view to drawing up an ethical frame of reference and common professional standards in that regard. A similar exercise, this time focused specifically on aid to unaccompanied children, took place on two occasions in Nairobi, Kenya.

**A world-wide network to protect family links**

In these times of globalized telecommunications, the ICRC’s Central Tracing Agency endeavours to restore and maintain family links in all situations of conflict or violence. Whether displaced, refugees, prisoners or missing persons, there are hundreds of thousands of people in the ICRC’s tracing files. When someone is found, he or she is put in touch with his or her family thanks to the worldwide network supported by the ICRC and also comprising over 120 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Cooperation between the ICRC and the National Societies was considerably extended in 1998. The ICRC continued its efforts to develop their capacity, offering training and support for the development of their tracing services and providing them with material and financial support. It organized several seminars offering opportunities for exchanges of experiences and training, in particular in the Horn of Africa, Moscow and Geneva.

While in Kosovo, for example, a tiny proportion of the population – even the displaced – had mobile phones, in most of the world, from Afghanistan to Sudan and from Sierra Leone to the southern Caucasus, the Red Cross message remains the most simple and effective method of enabling dispersed family members to keep in touch or resume contact with one another.

**IN 1998 THE ICRC:**
- collected 307,473 Red Cross messages and distributed over 295,605;
- reunited 5,077 families;
- located 2,997 people sought by their relatives;
- received 14,799 new tracing requests.
For detainees, receiving news of their families is always an important event. In a great many situations the ICRC gave prisoners of war, civilian internees and security detainees the chance to communicate with their loved ones.

**Reuniting families and the problem of unaccompanied children**

To preserve the unity of one's family is a universal right guaranteed by law. The ICRC does all in its power to reunite people who have been separated by events, seeking them actively and arranging to bring them together again.

In the course of 1998 the ICRC continued its activities aimed at locating people whose relatives had no news of them, and reuniting them with their families across front lines, as in Afghanistan, or national borders, as between East Timor and Portugal.

The issue of unaccompanied children is also one of the key concerns of the ICRC. In the African Great Lakes region its efforts to help them find their families continued with some success, and in November 1998 the 700th unaccompanied child was reunited with his grandmother thanks to the “photo-tracing” programme. This programme, which was launched in May 1997, still has on its lists 1,200 children who are too young or too traumatized to provide the minimum amount of information needed to identify and locate their parents. In cooperation with UNICEF, the ICRC published three albums containing 1,655 photos, and distributed over 10,000 copies of the albums throughout Rwanda. At the same time the ICRC continued to seek the families of around 6,400 unaccompanied children who have meanwhile been placed in orphanages or with foster families. Recently, 26 of these were repatriated from Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**The ICRC travel document: a safe-conduct for the future**

Sometimes, only a travel document supplied by the ICRC will allow a needy person with no identity papers to join his or her family who have settled in a third country. Owing to the swelling numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers, the ICRC is issuing more and more travel documents for people authorized to settle in host countries. In 1998, almost 5,000 such documents were issued in the four corners of the earth, including over 3,000 in countries such as Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Pakistan and India where whole families of displaced people or refugees found themselves destitute and without any identity papers whatsoever.
A haunting problem: the missing

Even when the guns fall silent, war continues to haunt the families of people who have disappeared – are they still alive? Are they wounded, or imprisoned? These families have the right to know. International humanitarian law imposes an obligation on all parties to a conflict to provide answers to their questions.

The experience of recent years, however, has shown how difficult it is to set the mechanisms for elucidating the fate of missing people in motion.

In the former Yugoslavia, while the process established by the ICRC for collecting information from the authorities was considered indispensable, and it is unanimously agreed that it has begun to yield results, the number of replies given by the parties concerned has not been satisfactory. The year was marked by a great many exchanges with other partners involved with a view to setting up a permanent national institution.

As for the people who disappeared during the Gulf war, the Tripartite Commission, chaired by the ICRC, continued its work to shed light on what happened to them, but results did not come up to expectations.

A situation of acute vulnerability

To be deprived of one’s freedom is in itself to be in a vulnerable situation vis-à-vis the detaining authorities and the prison environment. This vulnerability is particularly acute in a context of conflict and violence, where excessive and illegal recourse to force may become commonplace and where the effects of structural deficiencies – especially on the functional level – are exacerbated.

For the ICRC, what must be done is to prevent or put an end to disappearances and summary executions, torture, ill-treatment and the severing of family links, and to improve conditions of detention, taking the context into account.

Visits to detainees are carried out in accordance with the ICRC’s particular *modus operandi*: delegates meet the detainees in their places of detention, in private. Each case is examined in relation to those of all the detainees in the same situation, to whom the ICRC must also have access, wherever they may be. Delegates take full details of the identity of the detainees, whose individual cases are then monitored until their release. The detainees talk to the delegates about the problems facing them, the delegate informs the authorities concerned, and comprehensive measures are taken to try to solve those problems. Depending on the circumstances, this may involve confidential representations, an assistance programme and/or action to restore family links.

IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 1,546 places of detention in 59 countries;
- visited 212,076 people deprived of their freedom – prisoners of war, civilian internees or detainees in a situation of conflict or violence – and monitored 174,688 of them throughout their period of detention;
- provided detainees and their families with material and medical assistance worth 13.6 million Swiss francs.
Respect for physical integrity and dignity is the main objective of the ICRC's activities on behalf of people deprived of their freedom. While refraining from taking any stand on the reasons for arrest or capture, the ICRC spares no effort to ensure that these people enjoy the judicial guarantees enshrined in international humanitarian law and customary law.

The right to life is first and foremost the right to survival

In 1998, the disastrous level of detention conditions in several countries was only too evident. In clear contravention of the spirit and the letter of the applicable provisions of international law, men, women and children continue to survive or to die in inhumane and degrading conditions. Overcrowding due to a policy of mass arrests and/or the paralysis of the administration of justice, lack of resources, indifference or negligence – these are the most frequent causes of the deplorable conditions that prevail in many cases.

In some theatres of operations, because of the acknowledged inability of the authorities to shoulder their responsibilities, the entire prison population proved to be in such dire need in humanitarian terms that the ICRC was compelled to take action on a massive scale to save lives.

In Rwanda, given the large number of detainees, overcrowding and the high mortality rate in places of detention, the ICRC continued to distribute food, medicines and other basic necessities and to improve infrastructure such as latrines, stoves and water supply systems. This work was undertaken to supplement the efforts made by the authorities whose capacity and resources were inadequate to cope with the gravity of the situation.

In some places of detention in Afghanistan, for example, the ICRC distributed basic essentials and took part in work on the infrastructure which enabled detainees to survive an extremely harsh winter.

In Tajikistan, where severe cases of malnutrition were observed among the prison population, the ICRC launched a food-aid programme in prisons in 1996. In June 1998, however, it was forced to suspend the programme because of lack of cooperation from the authorities. In both Tajikistan and in Azerbaijan, the authorities have still not granted the ICRC access to all persons detained on security grounds. In the southern Caucasus, by contrast, large-scale programmes to combat tuberculosis in prisons were pursued (Azerbaijan and Georgia) or are in the process of being set up (Armenia).
New developments

In 1998 the ICRC gained access to detainees it had never visited before. In Nepal, for example, it reached an agreement with the government allowing it to visit people detained in connection with the tensions prevailing in some parts of the country. The first visits began in December.

In the autonomous Palestinian territories, the ICRC was authorized to visit detainees being held by the military intelligence service. Throughout the year, delegates continued to visit people detained under the responsibility of the security forces.

In Cambodia, detainees depending on the Ministries of National Defence and of the Interior – in other words, who are held in military camps, police stations and centres of the Gendarmerie royale – are now receiving ICRC visits under the terms of an agreement signed with the government in March 1998 (this is in addition to visits to prisons). In Myanmar, on the other hand, there has been no progress in regard to the ICRC’s request to visit detainees.

In Africa, many favourable developments helped the ICRC discharge its mandate more fully, in relation to both prisoners taken in international conflicts and people detained in connection with internal conflicts or tensions. In November, Cameroon and Nigeria decided to release all prisoners of war and civilian internees captured during their conflict over the Bakassi peninsula. Nigeria finally granted the ICRC access to its Cameroonian prisoners with a view to a comprehensive repatriation. This operation, which took place under the auspices of the ICRC, involved 124 Nigerian nationals and 88 Cameroonians, including the body of one person who had died.

In the context of the international armed conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the ICRC carried out its treaty-based humanitarian work. In Ethiopia it began to visit Eritrean prisoners of war and civilian internees, and 70 Ethiopian prisoners of war were repatriated under its auspices. At times of cross-border population movements – whether voluntary departures or expulsions – the ICRC offered its services as a neutral intermediary in order to ensure acceptable conditions of dignity and safety. Nevertheless, the ICRC was not able to carry out its mandate fully in Eritrea, especially in relation to Ethiopian prisoners of war.

In Lesotho, against the background of the intervention by the armed forces of the SADC, the ICRC obtained permission from the parties concerned to visit people captured or arrested in connection with the events of September 1998. In Zambia, ICRC delegates had access to people arrested following the attempted coup d’État in 1997.

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*SADC: Southern Africa Development Community*
Following the outbreak of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August, the ICRC obtained permission from the government to visit different categories of people deprived of their freedom. Visits were carried out in Kinshasa and Katanga. An agreement on visits was also signed with the Congolese Democratic Rally (Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie – RCD), and the ICRC subsequently saw people detained in Goma, Kindu and Kisangani. Efforts are currently being made to gain access to places of detention that have not yet been visited.

In addition, the ICRC visited 82 Rwandan prisoners of war under Zimbabwean responsibility in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a Ugandan prisoner of war was also seen, and 43 in Zimbabwe. In December, the ICRC visited 15 Zimbabwean prisoners of war in Kigali, and five Chadian prisoners of war under Ugandan responsibility in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the Republic of the Congo, negotiations currently under way between the authorities and the ICRC should lead to the signing of an agreement on visits to security detainees. In Equatorial Guinea, on the other hand, the ICRC is still not allowed to visit people arrested on security grounds in accordance with its customary procedures.

The ICRC welcomed the developments in 1998 relating to the conflict between Iran and Iraq. In April, over ten years after the conflict ended, 5,584 Iraqi prisoners of war detained in Iran and 319 Iranians held in Iraq (including three prisoners of war) were repatriated under ICRC auspices. At the end of the year a further 196 Iraqi prisoners of war were repatriated as well as 16 people of various other nationalities. The ICRC also repatriated the mortal remains of one Iraqi prisoner of war. Since August, the ICRC has visited 3,497 Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran with a view to finally securing the repatriation of all prisoners of war who want to return home, in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention.

In Western Sahara, over 1,900 Moroccan soldiers in the hands of the Polisario Front – most of them for over 20 years – continued to be detained despite the signing of a cease-fire in 1991.

Assistance: a holistic approach

The ICRC engages in activities to assist people directly and indirectly affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence on the basis of its mandate defined by the Geneva Conventions, its right of initiative in humanitarian matters, the victims' right to receive assistance and the Fundamental Red Cross and Red Crescent Principles. The ICRC's assistance goes first and foremost to the
direct victims of conflict: the wounded, disabled or sick, prisoners, the displaced, and the civilian population of occupied areas or besieged towns. In practice, and especially in long-drawn-out conflicts, the entire population suffers, the distinction between direct and indirect victims of the situation tends to become blurred, and assistance work must be adjusted to meet the needs of the ever more numerous vulnerable groups. The mission of the Health and Relief Division consists in preserving or restoring acceptable living conditions for victims of armed conflict so as to reduce their dependence on outside aid. Protecting health by means of assistance is part of the more general framework of protection, by international humanitarian law, of the fundamental rights and dignity of the individual in armed conflicts.

Activities are carried out in accordance with an order of priorities designed to reduce as rapidly and effectively as possible morbidity and mortality among the victims of armed conflict. Essentially this means giving precedence to access to water, food and basic necessities for survival with regard to local customs, and to satisfactory conditions of hygiene and shelter before concentrating on health services as such.

In the course of 1998, the Health Division and the Relief Division were merged to promote synergy between the services they offered. The new Division is organized into three units which are grouped under unifying concepts and function together: water and habitat, economic security, and health services.

**Water supply and housing**

The aim of the Water and Habitat Unit is to maintain or restore living conditions – in terms of water supply and housing – that will preserve the health of conflict victims. Its areas of activity include building, engineering, access to water, hygiene and environmental protection. These are mutually complementary, and in the field they often call for the same technical approach. The Unit has expertise in hydraulics and hydrogeology, electricity, and civil, chemical and environmental engineering. In 1998, its water and sanitation specialists were particularly in demand in Iraq (to maintain and repair water treatment plants), in Afghanistan (to repair latrines and maintain wells in Kabul) and in Somalia where, in addition to work to prevent cholera in Mogadishu, the ICRC took action after the floods to disinfect water, maintain wells and control the vectors of disease.

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**IN 1998 THE ICRC:**

- dispatched water and sanitation teams to 15 countries to provide displaced people with safe water and/or to repair water treatment and distribution systems in towns and regions affected by conflict;
- launched or completed 5 water and sanitation programmes by means of projects delegated to the National Red Cross Societies of Austria, Australia, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the United States of America;
- provided and/or installed water supply and sanitation equipment worth 14.3 million Swiss francs.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

♦ distributed medicines and medical supplies worth 36.6 million Swiss francs, in 51 countries;
♦ supplied most of the medicines, medical material and equipment for 12 hospitals in Africa and Asia, which admitted a total of 34,541 patients and where 163,694 people received outpatient treatment;
♦ sent medical teams to work in 5 hospitals for the whole year and in 5 hospitals for part of the year.

Access to adequate health care

The ultimate aim of the Health Services Unit is to give a population access to basic preventive and curative health care that meets universally recognized standards of quality and provides an adequate level of cover. Its objective is to assist the national or local health services and, where necessary, to substitute for them temporarily. To do this, the Unit offers the following services and support: surgical services, community health, prison health and orthopaedic rehabilitation services, and support in the areas of pharmacy and hospital care techniques, epidemiology, integration of staff and general training. In 1998 the ICRC opened a hospital in Freetown, Sierra Leone, to admit and treat the war-wounded, especially those who could not be treated by local facilities, notably the Connaught hospital. In southern Sudan, the ICRC was able to resume its assistance activities, in particular in the sphere of nutritional support, and an expatriate surgical team returned to the Juba hospital after an absence of over 18 months.

In the southern Caucasus, where tuberculosis remains a problem which is all the more disturbing in that strains resistant to the usual antibiotics have been observed, the ICRC continued its programme to treat TB patients among the detainees. This work is carried out in conjunction with WHO’s* efforts to control the epidemic. In Kosovo, after meeting the most pressing needs of the groups displaced because of the conflict, the ICRC worked to support the existing health system.

Rehabilitating the war-disabled

The ICRC’s rehabilitation centres for the war-disabled produced some 15,000 appliances (prostheses and orthoses). Three new centres were set up, in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tajikistan. The ICRC’s 22 prosthetic/orthotic centres make artificial limbs and other appliances, house the amputees throughout their rehabilitation and provide follow-up (repairs, adjustments, etc.). In addition, local staff are given appropriate training.

A vocational training programme has also started in the centres in Baku (Azerbaijan), Tbilisi and Gagra (Georgia). This programme, intended for around 30 trainees working in these centres, covers both theory and practice. The basic course will last for two years and aims at a level recognized by the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO). A manual covering the theoretical part, written by a prosthetics instructor based in Gagra, is currently in preparation. It will be translated into Russian, Georgian and Azeri.

* WHO: World Health Organization
Economic security: an innovative concept

The Economic Security Unit is concerned primarily with the means of production that are intended to cover all of a household’s basic economic needs as defined by the physiology, environment and culture of the population affected by armed conflict. Its aim is to bring the means of production in line with basic economic needs. To restore or preserve the economic self-sufficiency of war victims and to provide them with the goods and services essential for their survival when they are no longer able to obtain them through their own efforts, the Unit has expertise in nutrition, agronomy, veterinary science, economics and relief techniques.

The concept of economic security arose out of a comparison between the ICRC’s nutrition, agronomy and relief activities. While each of these three areas has its own particular technical aspects and practices, their aims coincide. At the start, agronomic assistance was aimed mainly at restoring the means of agricultural production, then it diversified its aims and began to encourage all of a household’s productive activities that could also generate income. The nutritionists, for their part, were interested in people’s access to food and made recommendations to help them survive when they could no longer do so using their own means of production. Relief activities put the nutritionists’ recommendations into practice but, in addition to food, non-food items essential to survival were supplied. The point of convergence between these aims is that, each in its own field, they aim to reinforce household\(^1\) economy.

This economy may be analysed as follows:

\(\diamond\) A household must have the time and means of production in order to engage in regular activities to produce goods and services intended for its own consumption and to be exchanged for income. The means of production are the work force, skills, production tools, property, animal resources, funds for investment, social status and production inputs.

\(\diamond\) Production activities must make it possible to cover all the household’s basic needs, which dictate compulsory expenditure defined by the physiology, environment and culture of the population group in question. They must therefore allow the household on the one hand to obtain goods such as food, housing,

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\(^1\) The household is the reference social denominator, as it is the smallest entity in a society that produces and consumes, and it is the smallest viable social entity.
household equipment, furniture, production tools and energy, and to renew them as they are consumed or used, and on the other to have access to services such as education, health, transport, communication and administrative services.

- The balance between the means of production and productive activities on the one hand and compulsory expenditure on the other determines a household’s economic security. Economic security means that the household is self-sufficient and can meet its own basic economic needs.

- When the means of production and/or productive activities are no longer sufficient to meet basic economic needs, households compensate for this deficit first of all by using up their specific reserves (stocks of consumer goods and convertible goods), then by relying on solidarity, and finally by using their survival reserves. When this happens, the household economy is heading for impoverishment in a process whose first phase involves loss of capital, followed by destitution.

This approach to household economy is illustrated in the figure below.
Taking into account all basic economic needs

Why talk about economic security rather than using the term in vogue, "food security"? It is obvious that some basic needs – water and food, for instance – are far more vital than others. Nevertheless, the fact remains that an irreducible part of expenditure will always go on services and non-food goods, such as housing, clothing, kitchen utensils and fuel, and this is too often overlooked in crisis situations. It is therefore vital to look at a household's economy from the angle of economic security, which takes into account all basic economic needs, rather than from the excessively restrictive angle of food security, which tends to ignore the fact that human beings need more than food to live on.

The aim of the Economic Security Unit is to make sure that the activities of its agronomists and nutritionists and the relief supplies distributed, both food and non-food, complement one another in such a way that a population affected by war does not lose its economic self-sufficiency in circumstances where this is threatened, and that it can survive and recover its self-sufficiency if it has been lost. The following diagram illustrates the types of action taken in crisis situations.
These different measures call for some comment.

Preventive measures denote the political negotiations that the ICRC engages in to prevent the occurrence of events and abuses that would plunge the affected population into a crisis situation.

Early relief consists in giving the population the means to avoid sliding into disaster pending the dissipation of the factors contributing to the crisis. Food distributions to support the economy, aid designed to diversify and intensify production, the protection of livestock by appropriate veterinary services: all these are early relief measures. In 1998 the ICRC took action in Guinea-Bissau, where the conflict that broke out in June caused over 350,000 people to flee the city of Bissau and take refuge in the country's rural areas, most of them returning to their villages of origin. The "hungry" period between harvests lasts from July to September, and the population lives off the income from its cashew harvest. This harvest, however, was poorer than usual and the borders were closed, which restricted trading. There was great concern in the countryside about the nutritional situation. The agricultural and food assessments carried out by the ICRC showed that while the countryside could absorb the displaced people, this would mean reduced rations for everybody, and above all would leave many families destitute. The ICRC therefore decided to distribute a full food ration to displaced people living temporarily in towns and a half-ration to those in the countryside until the harvest, which was delayed in 1998 because of the late arrival of the rains. The ICRC distributed food together with blankets and mosquito nets to over 120,000 people in the Baiata, Cacheu and Quinara areas.

Relief for survival consists in providing goods and services that are essential for a population's survival when the latter is completely destitute and when the effects on its health are often already grave. Throughout 1997, the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya was severely affected by a drought caused by the climatic disturbances associated with the *El Niño* phenomenon. The drought completely wiped out the sweet potato harvest, virtually the region's sole source of food. A survey conducted by the ICRC in November and December 1997 revealed a disastrous nutritional situation in villages inhabited by displaced people on the southern slopes of the mountains of Irian Jaya. After identifying three areas (Timika, Wamena and the area bordering on Papua-New Guinea) and placing them in decreasing order of priority in terms of factors such as the population's nutritional status and prospects for self-sufficiency, the ICRC launched an emergency food distribution programme combined with a medical programme. During the first half of 1998, 280 tonnes of food and other items were distributed to 14,000 beneficiaries in the first area, and 388 tonnes of food and seed to 15,000 people in 36 villages in the second area. The situation in the third area was monitored carefully, but no aid proved necessary. In July 1998, living conditions for the local population had returned to normal and the ICRC ended its aid programme.
The notion of "survival" is preferable to that of "emergency" which, in humanitarian circles, denotes a serious situation. The term "emergency" means that steps have to be taken quickly to prevent something disastrous from happening. If this definition is accepted, it is urgent to take the necessary measures to prevent a crisis from erupting. When it is no longer possible to adapt to the impact of the crisis factors, it is urgent to take early relief measures to prevent the population from being overwhelmed by the crisis and sliding into a downward spiral of loss of capital, destitution, inanition and perhaps death. When a population has survived a crisis, it is urgent to enable it to rebuild its economy, so as to avoid reducing it to permanent dependence on outside aid.

Rehabilitation consists in restoring the means of production to a level where they ensure a household's economic self-sufficiency. While the ICRC is capable of setting up large-scale and effective programmes for the primary sector of the economy, its resources are extremely limited in the secondary and tertiary sectors. In the primary sector, in fact, a small investment gives a high yield, as it is nature that takes care of the essentials: sun, water and land. The secondary and tertiary sectors, on the other hand, depend on economic parameters: a competitive market, investment security, demand in excess of supply, start-up money, industrial infrastructure and means of transport. That being so, an analysis of the fragility of industrialized and urban economies in a situation of war or tension is vital for pleading the cause of victims with the authorities who govern them.

In Afghanistan, where 80% of the population depends on agriculture, assistance in this sphere remained essential in 1998 to increase agricultural production and ensure access to food. The ICRC continued to focus its efforts on peasant families and people who had recently returned to their villages of origin. As a priority, it cleaned and repaired some 200 km of *karezes* (underground irrigation systems) and irrigation channels, thereby making it possible to resume the cultivation of over 15,000 hectares of agricultural land. In parallel, the ICRC distributed seed for potatoes, wheat and various vegetables, depending on the climate and requirements of the different regions. Tools such as hoes, sickles, secateurs and knives, made by local blacksmiths, were distributed as needed at the same time. In the Badghis valley it was noted that for every US dollar brought in by the ICRC in the form of agricultural assistance, a farmer could produce food worth US$ 8.6. In the Kabul and Bala Murgab regions the ICRC distributed improved wheat seed to increase the availability of good-quality wheat in Afghan markets. Farmers were encouraged to set up cooperatives so as to ensure that the programme would remain viable in the future. The ICRC also launched a forestry and fruit-growing programme. As many as 62,000 trees of various species intended for reforestation, preventing erosion and, in the long run, heating and building, were made available to private individuals, common land, hospitals and mosques. Some 47,000 fruit trees (mostly apple and apricot)
were grafted, and 314 hectares of orchards were planted as a result. These programmes were supplemented by various measures to control insects that cause damage to fruit trees, support bee-keeping, vaccinate livestock and train agricultural extension personnel.

Economic development does not fall within the scope of the ICRC, at least in the sense of reducing vulnerability to potential crises. Nevertheless, those who have analysed the vulnerability of a population in a crisis situation have a responsibility to ensure as far as possible that development agencies take charge of helping the fragile population once the crisis has passed. They also have a duty to ensure that rehabilitation programmes are followed by development programmes which genuinely consolidate the economic security of the populations concerned.

Evaluation, the key to the future

The ICRC has drawn up an evaluation policy and established an evaluation unit which will enable it to develop its activities in this sphere. The aim is constantly to improve the quality of its work for conflict victims by tailoring its responses more closely to humanitarian problems it faces. Both emergency action and longer-term projects must be evaluated, in all the ICRC’s areas of activity. These evaluations may lead to changes in the way malnourished children are treated, or in methods of teaching humanitarian law in secondary schools. They may lead to the development of humanitarian law as regards regulation of the production and use of certain weapons, or to a review of certain prophylactic measures recommended for expatriate staff.

Ongoing evaluations

In 1998, for example, several studies on resistance to anti-tuberculosis drugs among detainees were conducted in Azerbaijan on the basis of observations made by ICRC doctors. Some of the results were published in 1998. Following the evaluation of the TB control programme, the ICRC, in cooperation with WHO, published a brochure entitled Guidelines for the Control of Tuberculosis in Prisons. This brochure is intended to help those responsible for running such programmes to implement effective strategies for combating the disease, in particular short-term treatment under direct supervision, or DOTS.* In addition, two seminars for doctors in charge of TB control programmes were organized in Tbilisi and Myanmar.

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* DOTS: Directly observed treatment, short course strategy

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2 See p. 238.
In the context of the Afghan conflict and its humanitarian implications, several evaluations are currently under way: a case-control study to gauge the impact of a latrine-building programme on the incidence of infantile diarrhoea in Kabul, and a review of the files of all patients who underwent abdominal surgery following war injuries in Peshawar between 1986 and 1993. The agricultural assistance programme in Afghanistan is also the subject of a study, to assess its impact on the local economy.

In Africa, a vaccination campaign carried out by the ICRC in Mozambique was evaluated and the results published in 1998 in the *Journal of Tropical Pediatrics*. Another study dealt with the programme set up to help unaccompanied children in the Great Lakes region find their parents or other relatives, after the large-scale and repeated displacements of civilians that began in Rwanda in 1994.

**Policies for action and training**

The ICRC is keen to develop its policies for action. A seminar on primary health care was held in Nairobi to define the organization’s policy in this sphere more precisely. A seminar on water and environmental hygiene was given in Geneva for professionals from humanitarian agencies working in this area; the aim was to harmonize policies and the type of equipment used.

Training remains a priority for the ICRC. In 1998 HELP* courses on public health were run in Pretoria, Geneva, Baltimore, Montreal and Hong Kong. A course for engineers on environmental problems was given at the Neuchâtel Institute of Hydrogeology in Switzerland, and a course for health professionals from National Societies was organized in London. Seminars were also held within the framework of NOHA* in Aix-en-Provence and Uppsala. The ICRC helped prepare the multi-faculty programme on humanitarian action which began in November at the University of Geneva. The ICRC took full responsibility for teaching a two-week module of this one-year programme, which leads to a postgraduate diploma.

The ICRC’s experience in the sphere of war surgery is widely recognized. A seminar on care for the war-wounded, designed for military and civilian surgeons, took place in March 1998. Given the success of this seminar in previous years, it was also held for American military surgeons in Baltimore (USA), in April 1998.

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3 See pp. 162-167.

* HELP: Health Emergencies in Large Populations

* NOHA: Network on Humanitarian Assistance
An expert workshop aimed at defining guiding principles for pre-hospital care was organized in November, in order to measure more precisely the impact of this type of care on the mortality of the war-wounded. A book entitled *Hospitals for War-Wounded* was published by the ICRC during the year. This is a practical guide for setting up and running a surgical hospital in an area of armed conflict.

**The impact of ICRC studies**

It was an epidemiological study carried out by ICRC surgeons on wounds caused by anti-personnel mines that created worldwide awareness of the suffering caused by these deadly weapons and that led to the adoption of the Ottawa treaty\(^4\) banning their manufacture, stockpiling and use. By the end of the year, 58 States had ratified the treaty. The SIrUS\(^*\) project, launched in 1997, continues to develop, and several medical organizations have already endorsed its recommendations. This project, aimed at determining which weapons cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, proposes a logical approach for the application of humanitarian law to all existing weapons systems and for addressing the complex problem of "non-lethal" weapons. The criteria applied are based largely on clinical observations made by the ICRC's medical staff in the field. The study will be submitted to government experts in May 1999, in advance of the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which is due to be held next November.

The ICRC also carried out a study, commissioned by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, on the relationship - confirmed by experience - between the easy availability of weapons on the one hand and violations of humanitarian law and the worsening plight of civilians on the other.

**Cooperation with National Societies in the field**

The ICRC's partnership with National Societies consists in cooperating with them to assist victims of conflict and internal strife while at the same time helping to develop their capacity to respond to humanitarian needs.\(^5\) In 1998, in accordance with the 1997 Seville Agreement, the ICRC consistently sought to involve National Societies in its response to the needs of victims. In operations carried out jointly with National Societies, the ICRC incorporated various capacity-building measures, mainly in the areas of operational management and the development of human resources.

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\(^4\) See also pp. 319-321.

\(^5\) See also pp. 351-352.

\(^*\) SIrUS: Superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering
Working together in emergency situations...

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, the National Society, with the support of the ICRC, set up 14 first-aid posts throughout Kinshasa to treat the victims of the uprising. The first-aid posts were equipped with emergency kits and supplies. In the interests of security, VHF handsets, Red Cross vests, storage batteries and vehicles were supplied to the National Society, which provided excellent services to the wounded.

In Afghanistan, the Afghan Red Crescent was one of the first organizations to respond to the February and May earthquakes. Some 50 volunteers and staff from Faizabad, Rostaq and the National Society’s Kabul headquarters took part in the relief operations, and provided the victims with emergency medical and other assistance with the support of the ICRC and the Federation. In order to strengthen the Society’s management capacity and knowledge about the Movement, training sessions on dissemination and tracing activities were held for presidents, staff and volunteers of all the branches involved.

... and planning for the future

In India, a total of 250 senior Red Cross staff from the 31 state and Union Territory branches took part in a series of eight emergency preparedness workshops. These were organized by the ICRC to provide training in the preparation and conduct of humanitarian operations in situations of violence and internal strife (communal riots, militancy, inter-ethnic violence), a particular concern in several of the country’s states. A dissemination programme in Nagaland placed emphasis on the basic principles of humanitarian law and the ICRC’s traditional activities, in the context of the prevailing situation in the north-east.

In 1998 the ICRC introduced a new system of project management, monitoring and control at field level which allows both headquarters and field personnel to follow more closely and systematically the implementation of activities carried out in cooperation with National Societies.

Delegated and bilateral projects

The ICRC also works closely with National Societies in a position not only to provide financial support but also to take part in programmes by seconding staff or carrying out entire projects. In 1998, 32 projects relating to primary health care, public health, water and sanitation, community kitchens and home assistance, prosthetics/orthotics, dissemination of international humanitarian law and so on were delegated to 13 National Societies. Another 21 projects were carried

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See Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brasilia regional delegation, Buenos Aires regional delegation, Colombia, Dakar regional delegation, Georgia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Yemen.
out by National Societies on a bilateral basis, that is to say that the projects were not part of the ICRC's objectives in the area concerned. These ranged from psycho-social support to feeding programmes for the elderly and the reconstruction of a public health centre, and most of them were for war victims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both the bilateral and the delegated projects were conducted under the overall responsibility of the ICRC.  

Humanitarian diplomacy

The ICRC's work is 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 and another one in Addis-Ababa, in charge of relations with the OAU.*

Humanitarian coordination

The majority of today's armed conflicts are internal and often involve a number of ill-organized armed groups which are pursuing economic rather than political and military objectives. One of the consequences of this change in the nature of warfare is the increasing difficulty experienced by humanitarian organizations in carrying out their tasks effectively. The new challenges that the ICRC has to face include a decline in respect for humanitarian law, the loss of any distinction between political and military action on the one hand and humanitarian work on the other, problems of coordination between humanitarian organizations, and the increasing threat to the security of humanitarian personnel.

As part of its efforts to meet those challenges and to provide the necessary support for its field operations, the ICRC maintained and extended its contacts with a wide range of international, regional and non-governmental organizations in 1998. In such contacts care was taken to preserve the ICRC's independence and neutrality while at the same time meeting the requirement for consultation among agencies and securing political support for humanitarian action.

* OAU: Organization of African Unity
Consultation and contacts with other humanitarian agencies

In order to make their efforts on behalf of victims of armed conflict as effective as possible, humanitarian organizations are expected to harmonize their responses. The ICRC therefore continued to support several initiatives intended to step up consultation among such organizations.

As a standing invitee of the IASC,* the United Nations coordination mechanism, the ICRC voiced its opinions on humanitarian issues and shared information on its operations. It also took part in numerous working groups on operational matters and other issues. Close relations were maintained with OCHA* and the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group in both Geneva and New York. In the field, the ICRC made a substantial contribution to UN-led inter-agency coordination efforts and supported ad hoc arrangements designed to take rapidly changing circumstances into account. ICRC representatives also attended several meetings on the issue of coordination, for instance the Symposium on Humanitarian Coordination in Stockholm which brought together UN agencies and programmes, NGOs, donor States and States receiving humanitarian assistance. Finally, the ICRC participated in a number of UN-led joint training initiatives.

On the bilateral level, the ICRC continued its dialogue with several UN agencies and bodies, including UNICEF and WHO. High-level meetings took place notably with UNHCR, the WFP* and UNHCHR.* A first technical meeting was held with FAO.*

The ICRC actively pursued its exchanges with non-governmental organizations. A notable initiative taken in March was the holding of the second workshop on protection, entitled "Toward Professional Standards". Its purpose was to make progress towards the establishment of a common ethical frame of reference for protection work. In December the ICRC held an annual seminar for NGOs on humanitarian standards and cultural differences. In addition, a conference dealing with the issue of security for relief workers was organized jointly by ECHO* and the ICRC.

The ICRC also took an active part in NGO fora on various topics and continued its bilateral contacts with major NGOs working in the field. It paid particular attention to its relationship with the Steering Committee for Humanitarian

* IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee
* OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
* WFP: World Food Programme
* UNHCHR: Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
* FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
* ECHO: European Community Humanitarian Office
Response, with a view to forging closer links in the future. The ICRC followed, as an observer, the "Sphere Project", a collaborative process initiated by a consortium of humanitarian organizations with the aim of developing a set of standards relating to core areas of humanitarian assistance. At field level, the ICRC observed initiatives to formulate operational guidelines in different contexts, in particular in Africa. At the same time it continued to promote the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, which by the end of 1998 had been endorsed by over 140 NGOs.

In June, the ICRC convened the second Humanitarian Forum in Wolfsberg, Switzerland. On the agenda of the informal consultations were "Political and humanitarian action: key issues and priorities" and "Frameworks and mechanisms for supportive strategies between political and humanitarian actors". The Forum was attended by high-level representatives of donor governments, the main UN humanitarian, political and economic agencies, other international organizations, and NGOs.

**Humanitarian issues in international fora**

The ICRC continued its efforts to raise awareness of humanitarian issues in different fora. While taking due account of the respective areas of competence of humanitarian and political players, it endeavoured to promote mutual understanding of objectives and working methods through dialogue, and thus to develop complementarity. By providing concrete information about the needs of victims of armed conflict, for instance, it facilitated the incorporation of humanitarian considerations in political and military decision-making processes. The focus of the ICRC's humanitarian diplomacy remained improvement of compliance with international humanitarian law and the preservation of independent humanitarian action.

Over the past few years humanitarian issues have occupied a more prominent place on the agendas of political bodies such as the UN Security Council, the OAU, the OAS,* the OSCE,* the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. This is clearly reflected in their increasing openness and their interest in direct interaction with humanitarian organizations. The ICRC maintained regular contacts with all these bodies. As in previous years, it took part in debates on topics within its sphere of interest at the UN General Assembly and its committees. It also followed closely the adoption of numerous resolutions expressing support for humanitarian law and humanitarian activities. In addition, it took part in tripartite meetings between the OSCE, the Council of

* OAS: Organization of American States
* OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Europe and the UN. Close links were also maintained with several African sub-regional organizations, including ECOWAS,* the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community.

The ICRC perceives a pressing need to bridge the gap between emergency assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. It therefore endeavoured to strengthen its dialogue with development-oriented organizations, such as the World Bank and UNDP.* It also established closer relations with organizations dealing with security matters, such as NATO and the Western European Union. It attended various seminars and conferences on civil-military relations and peace support operations and organized, together with the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a symposium on the relationship between humanitarian action and political-military action, held in Brussels in February.

Cooperation with the legislative authorities of a large number of countries is an essential dimension of the ICRC's work to promote humanitarian law. At conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and in regional parliamentary associations it drew the attention of parliamentarians to humanitarian issues, in view of their role in the process of ratification and national implementation of humanitarian law.

* ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
Conflicts waged by fighters with increasingly fluctuating interests and alliances pose a great challenge to the ICRC in its efforts to promote respect for the basic principles governing international humanitarian law.
West Africa
ICRC delegations: 
Liberia, Sierra Leone
ICRC regional delegations: 
Abidjan, Dakar, Lagos

Central Africa
ICRC delegations: 
Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda
ICRC regional delegation: 
Yaoundé

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

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

Staff
ICRC expatriates: 192
National Societies: 100
Local employees: 2,540

Total expenditure Sfr 210,802,873

Expenditure breakdown
Protection/tracing: 60,306,189
Relief: 65,388,833
Health activities: 40,182,549
Cooperation with National Societies: 9,068,952
Promotion/dissemination: 6,955,647
Operational support: 17,153,609
Overheads: 11,747,094

1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1998.
Far from showing signs of improvement, the overall situation in sub-Saharan Africa took a turn for the worse in 1998. The profound upheavals witnessed in a number of countries marked the beginning of a fresh period of crisis and instability. New and unexpected conflicts erupted, while internal conflicts which had subsided or stabilized flared up anew. Elsewhere, existing tensions or unrest persisted. More often than not, mediation efforts, whether regional or international, failed to bear fruit.

A particularly worrying trend was the international dimension assumed by some internal conflicts. An army mutiny in June in Guinea-Bissau led to the intervention of Senegalese and Guinean troops. Several African States were involved militarily on one side or the other in the conflict that broke out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August. In some cases, such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the conflicts and resulting mass population movements threatened to destabilize whole regions.

Another significant factor was the speed and unpredictability of events. No one, for instance, foresaw the rapid escalation of a border dispute into full-scale war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Developments such as these obliged the ICRC to adapt constantly and often abruptly to situations as they emerged, evolved or changed course. This required a flexible approach and the capacity to act rapidly and mount a major operation at short notice, as was the case in southern Sudan when the number of expatriate staff soared from 15 to 80 in a matter of weeks, or conversely to downscale or reorient activities if security constraints prevented the ICRC from reaching the victims.

Indeed, in 1998 lack of security was once again the main obstacle for the ICRC in its efforts to carry out its humanitarian mandate in Africa. Tense moments in Sierra Leone at the beginning of the year and the abduction of ten Red Cross/Red Crescent staff in Mogadishu in April and of an ICRC team in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in July – all of which were resolved, thankfully, without serious consequences – meant that the ICRC had to suspend its activities and withdraw its expatriate staff from all or parts of the countries concerned. Insecurity also rendered whole regions off-limits to the ICRC at various times, such as Kivu provinces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August, north-eastern Rwanda and parts of northern and south-eastern Uganda. As always, the end result was that civilian populations in these areas were deprived of the protection and assistance they so sorely needed.

Among the immediately identifiable causes of the deteriorating security environment were the proliferation of opposition movements, especially in the Great Lakes region, the difficulties the ICRC encountered in establishing contact with them, the indiscipline of combatants, and conflicts driven by the assertion of ethnic identity, in which civilians are directly targeted and humanitarian agencies are perceived as an
impediment to the belligerents’ ultimate goals. In 1998, therefore, the ICRC con­tinued to invest in the field of dissemination of international humanitarian law and worked to establish or strengthen contacts with the armed and security forces across the continent so as to encourage the systematic incorporation of the law of armed conflict in military training and operations.

Some favourable developments for the ICRC are also worthy of mention. Relations with the government of Sudan were normalized and the organization was invited to resume its activities for people affected by the conflict in southern Sudan. Following the outbreak of the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the ICRC was able to establish a delegation in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, and in response to the conflict in Guinea-Bissau it opened a mission in Bissau. Improved security meant that it could envisage a gradual resumption of activities in Burundi and to that end an expatriate delegate was again stationed in the capital Bujumbura. Some significant progress was also made on the detention front. For the first time since the change of government in Kinshasa, the ICRC was able to visit detainees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Also for the first time, the ICRC was requested to oversee the repatriation of prisoners released by the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army in Sudan. Prisoners of war held by Nigeria and Cameroon in connection with the Bakassi peninsula dispute were also all repatriated under ICRC auspices in November.

The ICRC’s regional delegations played a key role, providing the support services that enhanced the organization’s ability to adapt rapidly to new or evolving operational situations. Also crucial to ICRC operations were the help and cooperation of the National Societies. Wherever possible, the ICRC worked alongside the National Society of the country concerned and supported its endeavours to bring aid to vulnerable populations. In particular, the ICRC sought to build the capacity of the National Societies to respond more effectively to emergency situations, to develop efficient tracing services and to promote knowledge and understanding of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its Fundamental Principles and the basic rules of humanitarian law.
Under the new NPP* government led by Charles Taylor, elected in 1997, Liberia struggled in vain to achieve lasting stability. A year after the end of the civil war that had devastated the country, Liberian society remained deeply divided, and thousands of its citizens, fearful of returning, continued to live outside its borders. The economy was in a state of collapse and the infrastructure, including health, education and social services, was in ruins.

The threat of violence from disgruntled servicemen and thousands of former combatants remained a constant problem. Hundreds of soldiers went on the rampage in May, demanding their settlement benefits. The disarmament and demobilization exercise in 1996-97 had failed to enrol the vast majority of fighters in reintegration programmes and, with unemployment high, there were few outlets for this large reserve of mostly uneducated young people.

During 1998, several outbreaks of violence occurred in Monrovia between supporters of Roosevelt Johnson, a wartime rival of Charles Taylor’s with a position in the new government, and the security forces backed by ECOMOG* soldiers. On each occasion, residents fled their homes in fear of a renewed internal conflict. In September some 50 people died when fighting broke out in Monrovia. On this occasion, Roosevelt Johnson and several aides took refuge in the United States embassy and after a six-day stand-off were allowed to leave the country. In its capacity as neutral intermediary, the ICRC was requested to oversee their departure.

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* NPP: National Patriotic Party
* ECOMOG: Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 31 Sierra Leonean combatants held in 2 places of detention and distributed food and material assistance (all prisoners were released in late March and transferred to refugee camps in Monrovia);
- visited 68 detainees held in Monrovia's central and military prisons in connection with the September clashes and distributed blankets, personal hygiene products and water containers;
- helped renovate the holding cells at Monrovia's police headquarters; completed rehabilitation work on the sewage and electrical systems and handed out plywood, mattresses, blankets and buckets to the inmates;
- conducted surveys to identify problems with the sanitary facilities and the water supply in all prisons visited; performed routine maintenance work, repairs and/or upgrading of sanitary facilities in Monrovia's central and military prisons and the Kakata and Gbarnga prisons;
- in conjunction with the Liberian Red Cross, exchanged 10,843 Red Cross messages for civilians, mainly Sierra Leonean refugees, including some on behalf of unaccompanied children trying to locate their parents, and reunited dispersed families;
- extended the Red Cross message network to areas where Liberian refugees were expected to return and the Vahun and Kolahun regions where Sierra Leoneans had taken refuge from the civil war in their country;
- continued to support 5 health clinics run by the Liberian Red Cross in Buchanan, Dolo, Gbarnga, Gbatala and Totota;
- until June, ran a mobile clinic operating in 5 camps sheltering displaced civilians around Monrovia;
- assisted the Ministry of Health with the logistics for a nationwide vaccination campaign;
- installed 5 hand-pumps and rehabilitated 6 in Gbarnga and Monrovia; chlorinated 869 wells;
- helped the Liberian Red Cross to implement its tracing programme by providing staff training, supervision and financial resources;
- provided the Liberian Red Cross with logistic support (medicines and fuel for ambulances) for its activities to assist victims of the September clashes in Monrovia;
- each month, assisted the Liberian Red Cross with distributions of food rations to the approximately 400 inmates in Liberia's 5 main prisons;
- organized 35 presentations on international humanitarian law for AFL* units, ECOMOG, the police and security forces;
- trained 175 AFL officers in the law of armed conflict during 3 separate 6-day seminars;
- organized workshops on humanitarian law for the National Commission on Human Rights and law students at the University of Liberia;
- organized a 2-week workshop for instructors from national security institutions, the police and immigration authorities on the subject of introducing humanitarian law into the training programmes for newly recruited officers.

AFL: Armed Forces of Liberia
influx of Sierra Leonean refugees

Following the February events in Sierra Leone, approximately 57,000 refugees crossed the border into Liberia at Vahun, Lofa County. Half of the refugees remained in Vahun, while the more able-bodied made their way to refugee settlements in Kolahun. Humanitarian organizations provided assistance but, owing to problems of access, which were compounded by the onset of the rainy season, many people suffered from malnutrition and the increased incidence of diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea. Otherwise, the humanitarian situation remained relatively stable throughout the year. Programmes undertaken by a variety of aid organizations, once confined to a handful of safe and accessible counties, could be carried out on a nationwide basis.

The improved situation enabled the ICRC to focus its attention on activities to protect detainees. During 1998, its access to the country's detention facilities increased significantly. The Ministry of Justice agreed to give delegates unlimited access to detainees under its jurisdiction. The ICRC was also granted access to Sierra Leonean combatants captured on Liberian soil. Intense negotiations were conducted to obtain access to people taken into custody following the September incident. The ICRC obtained necessary authorizations from the Ministries of Defence and Justice to enter Monrovia's central and military prisons in November and visits were duly carried out.

With the exception of water and sanitation projects and visits to detainees, all ICRC activities (assistance to detainees, Red Cross message services, health programmes and dissemination) were conducted in cooperation with the Liberia National Red Cross Society and were geared to strengthening its capacity to assume full responsibility in these areas in the future.

In June, the ICRC and the Liberian Red Cross organized a football event featuring the internationally renowned player George Weah to launch the slogan "Respect the Rules", as part of a campaign to promote humanitarian law. At the beginning of the game, before 15,000 spectators, the players demonstrated the effects of the breakdown of law and order by flouting the rules and ignoring the referee. The event helped bring home to the public that, just as in a football game, rules apply and need to be respected in times of conflict.

The ICRC delegation provided logistic and other assistance to operations in Sierra Leone in February and March when it facilitated the evacuation by air of ICRC and other NGO staff from Kenema and Bo. In December, it also served as a link between ICRC staff trapped in Freetown and the ECOMOG command/Sierra Leonean authorities.

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3 See pp. 45-50.
4 Ibid.
The year got off to a grim start with growing signs of a confrontation between ECOWAS* and the AFRC,* which had seized power in May 1997 and was subsequently joined by the armed opposition, the RUF.* The situation reached a climax on 5 February, when ECOMOG troops launched a nationwide operation to remove the junta and reinstate the elected government of President Kabbah. In a seven-day battle they gained control of the capital, forcing the remnants of the AFRC/RUF alliance to retreat to their former strongholds in the east and north. From there, the rebels committed appalling atrocities against the civilian population, such as the amputation of hands or other parts of the anatomy, as well as burning and looting homes, villages and plantations.

President Kabbah returned to Freetown on 10 March and immediately declared a state of emergency. By this time, fighting had totally ceased in the capital and across approximately one-third of the territory (mainly in the Southern Province) under the control of ECOMOG and the CDF.* The rebels kept up their campaign of terror for three months, after which they appeared to change tactics, with fewer cases of wanton brutality against civilians. However, the situation remained extremely volatile and unpredictable, with repeated hit-and-run attacks and ambushes by the rebels in the northern, eastern and central parts of the country.

On 13 July, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1181 creating UNOMSIL* and authorizing the deployment of 70 military observers and a

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* ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
* AFRC: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
* RUF: Revolutionary United Front
* CDF: Civil Defence Forces
* UNOMSIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
medical unit to assist the government and ECOMOG in implementing the government’s programme for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In early August, the RUF leader Foday Sankoh was brought back to Freetown from Nigeria, where he had been held in custody for possession of arms and on suspicion of arms trafficking. In a televised address, he called on his followers to observe a cease-fire. The RUF, claiming that his statement was made under duress, demanded his release via the BBC* and, failing this, threatened to step up its operations.

In December, rebel groups began a series of simultaneous attacks on ECOMOG positions throughout the country. A meeting called by the Committee of Five in Abidjan on 28 December failed to yield any substantial results. The rebels intensified their offensive, launching an assault on the ECOMOG barracks and camp in Hastings (19 km from Freetown) on 30 December, and on Port Loko (a strategic point on the road to the Lungi international airport) and Segbwema town. At the end of the year, confusion reigned as to who was in control of what and the rebels were advancing on Freetown.

In February 1998, the ferocity of the fighting compelled the ICRC to suspend its operations up-country, but it remained in the capital, as it had done throughout the nine-month junta rule. In the first week of February, more than 4,000 people sought shelter in the ICRC compound in Freetown and were given food, medical aid and other assistance. One part of the delegation was quickly converted into a first-aid post to treat the war-wounded, while the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society manned emergency first-aid posts in other areas of the city. Urgently needed medical supplies were delivered to Connaught hospital amidst great danger.

Remaining ICRC stocks of food, medical materials and other supplies and equipment were lost in widespread looting in Freetown, Segbwema, Kenema and Makeni. Sub-delegations in the east were stripped down to the very last item. ICRC staff were threatened at gunpoint, which prompted the evacuation of expatriate personnel from Makeni, Segbwema and Kenema on 11 February. Tragically, a National Society employee and his son were killed during the hostilities.

Shortly after the worst of the clashes had ended on 14 February, National Society relief workers reported that the fighting and looting in Freetown had left some 6,000 people homeless, and ICRC delegates and Red Cross volunteers distributed food and other assistance. They also resumed food distributions, begun the previous year and interrupted because of the fighting, to hospitals and various social welfare institutions in the city, including orphanages, children’s feeding centres and homes for the elderly.

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* BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

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5 A group of five countries, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria, mandated by ECOWAS to help find a negotiated settlement to the conflict in Sierra Leone.
The battle for Freetown and the rebels’ subsequent campaign of terror in the provinces triggered major population movements. Some 150,000 people sought refuge in the northern and eastern regions and a further 250,000 people fled to neighbouring Guinea\textsuperscript{6} and Liberia.\textsuperscript{7} Meanwhile, the scarcity and irregularity of food aid in camps in Liberia prompted thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees to return. Many were unable to go back to their homes in rebel-held areas and found themselves displaced in their own country. Their presence put additional strain on areas where food was already in short supply and health facilities inadequate. The plight of the civilian population, both resident and displaced, worsened with the onset of the rainy season (often referred to as the lean period). The pressure exerted on food supplies by civilians, as well as by the CDF and the rebels, led to widespread malnutrition among both children and adults.

Initially, it was hard to assess the situation of many of these people owing to the prevailing insecurity in many areas. Delegates were unable to travel by road and most operations up-country were carried out from offices in Bo and Makeni through the efforts of local staff, with support and visits from expatriates based in Freetown. From September, delegates were able to use a helicopter to reach hitherto inaccessible areas, where they assessed the extent of the needs and distributed assistance. However, this was still only possible in ECOMOG-controlled regions. A permanent expatriate presence was re-established in Kenema in May.

In Northern Province, the ICRC carried out relief operations for displaced people and for host families, some of whom were sheltering up to 20 or 30 people in one house.

More than 200 victims of amputations, severe lacerations or other forms of mutilation were admitted to hospitals in the course of the year. It was estimated that for every person admitted, some three or four died or remained in the bush. The horrific and debilitating nature of many of the injuries prompted the ICRC to open the 60-bed Netland surgical facility on 26 June, staffed by a team of six expatriates and providing specialized reconstructive surgery. Where necessary, patients were transferred after surgery to the Lakka Rehabilitation Centre, which was set up by the ICRC with a capacity of 120 patients to provide the appropriate environment and expertise for post-operative rehabilitation.

The national health system had been brought to the point of collapse during the rule of the junta and subsequently by the months of conflict and instability, and had become almost entirely dependent on assistance from humanitarian organizations. Many health facilities found themselves overstretched and unable to cope with the number of wounded and the types of injury. Throughout the year,

\textsuperscript{6} See p. 51.
\textsuperscript{7} See p. 44.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 17 detention centres, mostly in Freetown, and registered 2,390 detainees held in connection with the conflict; provided assistance to detainees in the form of hygiene products and leisure items; closely monitored the conditions of detention of detainees under 15 years of age and mothers detained with their children;
- visited a number of detainees in the hands of ECOMOG forces;
- supplied the central prison hospital in Freetown with basic medicines;
- carried out 2 water and sanitation projects in prisons in Freetown and Kenema;
- debriefed victims of or witnesses to atrocities with a view to collecting first-hand information on grave violations of humanitarian law and making representations to the relevant authorities;
- in cooperation with the Sierra Leone Red Cross, distributed food and material assistance (kitchen utensils, plastic sheeting, blankets and hygiene products) to 17,923 civilians who had lost their homes;
- distributed 264.8 tonnes of food and 26.2 tonnes of material assistance to an average of 5,000 civilians living in 38 institutions in Freetown, including hospital patients, orphans, malnourished or disabled children, displaced primary and secondary school pupils, young delinquents and street children;
- distributed jointly with the Sierra Leone Red Cross 432.6 tonnes of rice seed and 1,797 tonnes of food for agricultural work provided by the WFP* to 22,800 farming families in Southern and Eastern Provinces;
- distributed seed and fishing materials to 48 groups of fishermen in Kenema and Segbwema districts;
- provided food assistance to 2,545 Liberian refugees and 4,685 displaced people living in camps;
- evacuated people suffering from gunshot wounds, deep lacerations or limb amputations to Freetown for urgent reconstructive surgery;
- performed over 900 operations on war-wounded patients at the Netland surgical centre in Freetown; provided post-operative rehabilitation for patients at the Lakka Rehabilitation Centre;
- assisted the war-wounded in the Wilberforce military hospital and Connaught hospital in Freetown and lent support to the Princess Christian Hospital by financing the treatment of 430 destitute mothers and carrying out rehabilitation work;
- supplied the district hospitals of Kenema, Magburaka, Makeni and Segbwema with food and medical, surgical and dressing materials;
- delivered supplies for the treatment of civilians in primary health care clinics in Freetown and the provinces, where patients were seen and children immunized against common diseases;
- supported a clinic serving the displaced people at the Waterloo camp;
- carried out a supplementary feeding programme in Makeni for severely malnourished and moderately malnourished children;

* WFP: World Food Programme
- continued the well chlorination programme begun in August 1997, treating 1,200 wells and sinking 50 new ones; established ring-processing workshops in Kenema, Makeni and Port Loko and began a well-digging programme in September (interrupted following new upheavals);

- started a chlorination programme in Makeni and Port Loko to ensure a safe water supply for 800,000 civilians;

- rehabilitated the water-treatment plant in Lungi, to supply the town hospital;

- supplied essential chemicals and reagents for functioning water-treatment plants throughout the country, thus enabling the national water company to provide safe drinking water;

- repaired and rehabilitated the Banda and Sanda water-treatment plants, providing drinking water for some 200,000 people, 45% of them displaced;

- began the repair and rehabilitation of the water-supply and sanitation system in Kenema hospital, providing each ward of the 265-bed hospital with piped water and toilets; began work on connecting the Bo hospital to the mains;

- provided the feeding centre in the Royal Technical College camp in Kenema with piped water, washing areas and toilet facilities;

- provided the feeding centre in the Royal Technical College camp in Kenema with piped water, washing areas and toilet facilities;

- provided financial and material support for the Sierra Leone Red Cross emergency and health programmes, including assistance to 6 health clinics, as well as for the National Society's tracing and dissemination activities;

- handed over the feeding programme in Freetown's social welfare institutions to the National Society in July, but continued to supply logistic support, hygiene products and high-protein biscuits for the programme;

- to enhance security, began a drive to increase understanding of the ICRC's role, focusing on checkpoints throughout the country;

- began a 3-phase dissemination campaign for the CDF in Southern Province by staging a play entitled A Flame in the Dark explaining the role of the Red Cross in general and the ICRC in particular; the play was performed in 11 towns of Southern Province for 3,000 spectators;

- gave presentations to doctors and hospital staff in Freetown, Makeni and Kenema on the ICRC's mandate and working methods;

- maintained contacts with local media, in particular radio stations Kiss 104 in Bo and the Mankneh covering Makeni town, which broadcast ICRC press releases and updates on activities, and also with the national television station which reported on ICRC medical activities and broadcast ICRC films;

- conducted dissemination sessions for expatriate and locally hired staff in order to encourage behaviour designed to enhance the image of the ICRC and the Red Cross;

- kept government officials, the media, donors and the humanitarian community abreast of ICRC activities through a quarterly bulletin.
the ICRC provided hospitals and health centres in Freetown and the provinces with basic medicines, rehabilitated damaged facilities and carried out work on water-supply and sanitation systems. Special attention was paid to the maternity hospital in Freetown, which received material assistance as well as the services of expatriate staff and training for local staff.

Following the ECOMOG intervention and the restoration of civilian rule, the number of detainees increased sharply. By mid-year some 1,500 people had been arrested, many on suspicion of collaborating with the former junta. Trials began in April, and in October some 24 of the accused were executed for their alleged involvement in the May 1997 coup d'état.

From as early as 19 February, delegates were allowed to visit detainees, including both combatants and civilians, captured by ECOMOG. From then on the ICRC had easy and regular access to civilian places of detention in safe areas. Water-supply and sanitation work was carried out in several places and assistance and essential medical supplies distributed. The organization also obtained authorization to visit all persons held in areas under ECOMOG control. Furthermore, approaches were made to the governments of neighbouring countries with a view to gaining access to any detainees held in connection with the Sierra Leonean conflict. The ICRC received a positive response to its proposal in Liberia, but did not get the necessary go-ahead in Guinea.

A memorandum drawing attention to the essential rules of international humanitarian law was submitted in February to governments seconding troops to ECOMOG. In addition, the ICRC appealed publicly to the parties to abide by humanitarian law. On 5 June, extremely concerned by the atrocities committed against civilians, the ICRC issued a press release calling on the former junta and allied rebel forces to respect civilian life and human dignity.

\footnote{See p. 44.}
ABIDJAN
Regional delegation
(Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Togo)

Of the countries covered by the regional delegation. Benin and Ghana were stable in 1998, while the three others - Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Togo - experienced some form of instability or unrest.

With two years to go before the presidential elections scheduled for 2000, tension was already mounting in Côte d’Ivoire. The government took a number of steps, including measures strengthening the role of the army in maintaining law and order and giving the Head of State greater powers over the postponement or cancellation of the electoral process. The opposition responded by calling on the civilian population to take to the streets in protest. Meanwhile, the military presence was increased in western Côte d’Ivoire, which is traditionally the focal point for opposition to the government and where some 150,000 Liberians had taken refuge.

In 1998, Guinea was involved militarily on two fronts. In June, it sent several hundred troops to Guinea-Bissau to help the government deal with the mutineers, and Guinean forces clashed on several occasions with Sierra Leone rebels along the border in Guinea Forestière. The country also experienced internal tensions linked to the presidential elections in December.

More than 250,000 refugees fleeing the violence in Sierra Leone sought refuge in Guinea Forestière. Their presence put additional strain on the fragile regional economy, and the wounded among them placed heavy demands on the local medical infrastructure. In addition, the clashes between the Guinean armed forces and Sierra Leonean rebels drove residents from their homes. These displaced people in turn put pressure on the local communities where they took refuge.

The ICRC provided medical assistance to hospitals treating injured and mutilated Sierra Leoneans and expanded its network of volunteers in refugee camps in order to offer Red Cross message services to refugees separated from their families. It also pursued its efforts to gain access to all detainees covered by its mandate in the country, including Guinean military personnel accused of involvement in the 1996 coup attempt and captured Sierra Leonean fighters. The ICRC’s offer of services with respect to these detainees, made in July, had not, however, received a positive response by the end of the year.

* See pp. 54-58.
*10 See pp. 46-47.
unrest in Togo

In Togo, presidential elections went ahead in June amid allegations of serious irregularities. Opposition groups joined forces and delivered an ultimatum to the government. Occasional armed clashes took place and army desertions increased.

At the regional level, the delegation continued to carry out its traditional tasks, targeting a number of specific groups. These tasks involved promotion of humanitarian law, and in particular its incorporation in the training of the armed forces in every country of the region; spreading awareness of the activities of the ICRC and the Movement and of the Red Cross principles through the media; and encouraging the teaching of humanitarian law in business, law and journalism schools throughout the region. The delegation actively supported the work of the Interministerial Committee for implementation of international humanitarian law in Côte d'Ivoire and encouraged the authorities of Togo and Benin to set up similar national bodies. It also continued its cooperation programmes with the region's National Societies, concentrating on promoting structural development, training staff and volunteers and supporting activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- conducted a nutritional survey of detainees at the central prison in Abidjan, in cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire and MSF,* and rehabilitated the kitchen facilities (water supply and stoves);
- carried out 1 follow-up visit to Gagnoa prison in Côte d'Ivoire, visiting a total of 35 detainees and registering 16 detainees arrested in connection with the election boycott in 1995;
- exchanged 4,268 Red Cross messages in Côte d'Ivoire and in Guinea, mainly on behalf of Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees;
- distributed around 400 kg of medical supplies to the hospitals in Guéckédou and Kissidougou in Guinea, where most of the wounded Sierra Leonean refugees were treated;
- strengthened the capacity of the National Societies to take action in emergency situations by supporting first-aid training and providing first-aid materials;
- covered the costs of publication of regular National Society newsletters in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Ghana and Guinea, and paid the salaries of dissemination and emergency coordinators;
- supported the Togolese Red Cross during demonstrations linked to the electoral process in Togo, evacuating some 50 wounded;
- continued its efforts to promote greater understanding and acceptance 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;
- promoted the "So Why?" awareness campaign in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana;
- continued to provide most countries of the region with support in regard to the adoption of laws protecting the emblem and the revision of legislation to repress war crimes.

* See pp. 340-341.

MSF: Médecins sans frontières
At dawn on 7 June General Mané, the Chief of Staff of the Guinea-Bissau army, launched an insurrection in the capital Bissau. He had just been dismissed by the country’s President amid allegations of arms smuggling between Guinea-Bissau military officers and rebel groups in the Casamance region of Senegal. Many soldiers opted to remain loyal to their former Chief of Staff, which obliged President Vieira to request the assistance of several thousand troops from Senegal and a few hundred from Guinea. The move was billed simply as an operation to restore order and to permit the evacuation of foreign nationals, but it quickly became clear that the opposition was much stronger than the government and its supporters had originally believed.

Seven weeks of heavy fighting ensued, culminating in a provisional cease-fire agreed on 26 July under the aegis of the CPLP* and ECOWAS and confirmed a month later. During talks in Abidjan in September, the parties failed to reach an agreement and fighting broke out again in October. This time the self-proclaimed military junta consolidated its control of almost the entire territory of Guinea-Bissau, with the exception of the capital. A new cease-fire led to further negotiations in Abuja, Nigeria, in November. On this occasion both sides agreed to the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Guinea-Bissau, together with the simultaneous deployment of an international buffer force between the two warring parties and along the Senegalese border. A first contingent of ECOMOG troops from Togo arrived in Bissau in December and both parties eventually agreed on the choice of a new Prime Minister and the distribution of government posts and responsibilities. Even so, at the end of the year both parties remained entrenched in their positions and Senegalese forces were still camped on the front line.

Most of the fighting took place in Bissau and its surroundings, prompting the exodus of almost the entire population of the capital. The city was subjected to intensive shelling which killed or wounded several hundred civilians, although material damage was limited and the infrastructure remained largely intact. An estimated 200,000 civilians fled their homes, scattering mainly to the north and east of the country where they found refuge with family or friends. As soon as the situation improved after the first cease-fire people began to return, but many left

* CPLP: Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries)
again in October during the second phase of the conflict, this time finding shelter with religious missions just outside the capital. Their premises lacked the facilities to accommodate so many people at one time and living conditions for the displaced people were difficult.

On 14 June the ICRC opened a mission in Bissau and a week later an office in Bafatá, the country’s second largest town. In accordance with the provisions of the Seville Agreement, it assumed the role of lead agency responsible for organizing and coordinating the Movement’s relief operations, working in close cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Guinea-Bissau and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which prior to the conflict had been conducting activities to strengthen the capacity of the National Society.

In the early stages of the conflict, the most pressing needs were to evacuate the war-wounded and to distribute food and material assistance to those residents who had chosen to remain in Bissau. A nurse toured the medical facilities still functioning in the capital and distributed urgently needed medicines. Given the high number of displaced people, the ICRC also carried out several surveys of the food and medical situation in the provinces. Where necessary, medical supplies were handed out to regional health centres and hospitals. So as to avoid depletion of local resources, food supplied by the WFP was distributed by the ICRC, in accordance with the findings of its surveys, in the regions of Bafatá, Quinara and Cacheu. The ICRC also set up a tracing network, in cooperation with the regional branches of the National Society, to enable families displaced by the conflict to stay in touch with their relatives abroad through Red Cross messages.

Throughout the conflict the ICRC established and maintained good relations with all sides, and the security environment was generally conducive to its work. On a number of occasions the ICRC appealed to the warring parties to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law, in particular to distinguish between civilians and combatants and to protect and respect persons who were not or were no longer taking part in the hostilities, as well as those displaying the red cross emblem. The ICRC was also called on several times to play the role of neutral intermediary, for example in offering the protection of the red cross emblem to humanitarian aid convoys crossing front lines, facilitating the return of the junta’s negotiating team from Abidjan, and escorting 122 children from the SOS Children Kinderdorf orphanage in Bissau to the Wassadou border post.

Prior to the conflict, the regional delegation had been visiting detainees falling within its mandate in Guinea-Bissau. When the fighting broke out, the ICRC took steps to obtain access to people arrested by both sides in connection with the June events, including the submission of a formal offer of services to the government at

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12 See p. 350.
continuing tensions in the Casamance region of Senegal

the end of July. From August, delegates were able to visit prisoners in the hands of the junta, and at the end of the year the ICRC had received the necessary authorization to begin visits to detainees held by the government.

Legislative elections in Senegal went off smoothly in May, with the Socialist Party of President Diouf gaining the majority of seats in the National Assembly, despite minor rumblings about electoral irregularities from the opposition, the Senegalese Democratic Party.

In June, Senegalese forces launched a military operation in Guinea-Bissau in support of the beleaguered President Vieira. Planned as a short, sharp intervention, the troops found themselves facing stiffer opposition than expected and were still firmly in position at the end of the year.

Sporadic clashes continued to take place in Casamance between the separatist MDPC* and the Senegalese armed forces, although they were less violent than in the previous year. During that turbulent period, a number of people had been arrested, nearly doubling the number of persons visited by the ICRC in the various places of detention in Casamance and in Dakar. Regular reports on ICRC visits were submitted to the relevant Senegalese authorities with recommendations for improvements to the general conditions of detention.

The Senegalese Red Cross Society estimated that the number of people displaced in Casamance had risen to 20,000 by July. The general climate of insecurity had prompted most of these people to abandon their homes and to seek refuge with relatives or friends. As a result of their displacement, they had ceased all economic activity and their presence was a drain on the resources of the host families.

The widespread presence of landmines restricted the ICRC’s movements in the Casamance region to Ziguinchor and the main roads linking the town with Bignona and Oussouye. The ICRC maintained support for the work of the Senegalese Red Cross in the troubled region, assisted it in the areas of emergency preparedness and dissemination and provided it with structural support.

In Mali, the government struggled to reform the economy and to strengthen the democratic system so as to improve the situation of one of the poorest countries in the world. In the north, many problems remained unresolved, including the reintegration into society of former combatants and of the thousands of remaining refugees who returned from exile in neighbouring countries in mid-year. Meanwhile, people in the north continued to eke out a living in harsh conditions, with a minimum of possessions and cattle and inadequate shelter, water supply and health services.

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13 See the ICRC’s 1997 Annual Report, pp. 51-52.

* MDPC: Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance
The ICRC’s health activities continued in northern Mali with the aim of assisting the Malian government in reorganizing and developing the primary health care system, which had fallen apart because of the conflict, and setting up new health posts. Programmes were carried out by the ICRC in the area around Timbuktu and by the Belgian Red Cross as a delegated project around Bourem. In all cases, programmes benefited from the full cooperation and participation of the local communities, which paid part of the cost of restoration or construction of the health posts. In addition, local health staff were trained in order to improve or develop their skills.

In 1998, free aid in the areas of agriculture, livestock-rearing and fishing was phased out in favour of a community-managed revolving fund which provided materials to beneficiaries at subsidized prices. The ICRC completed its two-year veterinary programme at the end of the year. Projects to improve the water supply of both nomadic and sedentary communities carried on.

Although there were few changes in Niger's political landscape, the internal situation was relatively volatile and unpredictable, with the legitimacy of the government still contested by opposition parties. The year was punctuated by several strikes, serious grain shortages caused by drought, a rise in grain prices and other difficulties for the civilian population. Implementation of the peace accords reached with the rebel movements was slow, but armed anti-government groups were eventually demobilized. Banditry was still rampant in the Agadez region, however, owing to the large number of weapons in circulation.

Besides dealing with the above operational priorities, the regional delegation pursued its activities to promote knowledge of humanitarian law, encourage its inclusion in the curricula of universities and academic institutions, and advise States on its implementation at the national level, with particular reference to the drafting of legislative measures on the use of the emblem and repression of war crimes and the setting-up of interministerial committees. Similarly, the ICRC provided the region’s National Societies with regular support for their dissemination and emergency preparedness activities and ad hoc assistance to vulnerable people.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in Guinea-Bissau, registered and visited detainees held by the military junta; prior to the conflict, it also continued its visits to detainees arrested following the attempted coup of 1993 and imprisoned in a rehabilitation and reform centre in Bra;
- in Senegal, visited some 300 people arrested in connection with the events in Casamance and held in 6 places of detention in Dakar, Ziguinchor and Kolda, and distributed mats, soap and disinfectant; it also secured the release of 10 detainees over 70 years old on humanitarian grounds and of 5 detainees for medical reasons;
- in Gambia, continued to visit detainees arrested in connection with the 1994 coup attempt and its aftermath and held at Mile 2 prison in Banjul and Jeshwang prison;
- exchanged 1,330 Red Cross messages between civilians in Guinea-Bissau and family members abroad;
- reunited 15 unaccompanied children registered on the islands of the Bijagos archipelago in Guinea-Bissau with their parents in the capital Bissau;
- in Guinea-Bissau, from August up to the end of the year, supplied 1,844 tonnes of food (rice, maize flour, corn/soya blend, beans and vegetable oil) provided by the WFP to around 161,000 displaced people in Bafatá, Cacheu and Quinara;
- gave financial and logistical support to the Red Cross of Guinea-Bissau, which was charged with distributing assistance provided by the government authorities to people in Bissau town;
- between September and October, distributed 7.5 tonnes of soap to displaced people in the Bijagos archipelago of Guinea-Bissau;
- from October, in cooperation with a local NGO, supplied 377 kg of vegetable seed and 2,500 buckets for market gardens throughout Guinea-Bissau in order to enhance food production; on completion in 1999 the programme aimed to reach some 10,000 beneficiaries;
- in Senegal, helped finance the distribution by regional Red Cross volunteers of 229.2 tonnes of rice, maize and vegetable oil to 18,800 displaced people in the Ziguinchor region of Casamance;
- in Mali, distributed 28.3 tonnes of rice seed and 8.2 tonnes of sorghum seed to farmers; vaccinated 122,265 head of livestock, treated others in conjunction with the authorities and built up stocks of veterinary medicines; handed out 8,671 blankets and 3,520 tarpaulins to destitute nomadic families, schools and returnees;
- in Guinea-Bissau, provided Bissau's main hospital, Simon Mendes, and other smaller facilities with medical supplies and medicines; repaired the damaged radiology, maternity and administration wings of the Simon Mendes hospital; distributed medical supplies to dispensaries and health posts in southern and central areas of the country;
- in Senegal, donated medical supplies to the Ziguinchor regional hospital to replenish its emergency stocks;
- began construction of 6 community health centres in Mali and maintained contact with 8 existing centres to assist them in improving their services;
- by means of a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross, built community health centres, health posts and maternity clinics in Mali;
- in Mali, vaccinated children and women; trained local health staff;
- built or rehabilitated 23 wells and other water-supply systems serving the health posts and isolated rural communities in the Bourem and Timbuktu regions of northern Mali;

- provided structural support for the region's National Societies, mainly through staff training, assistance with the production of newsletters, purchase of equipment and the provision of materials for their activities;

- pursued its efforts to promote greater understanding and acceptance 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;

- organized a series of presentations on humanitarian law in military camps in Senegal, reaching 1,063 officers and soldiers;

- in Gambia, in cooperation with the Gambian Red Cross, began a study of existing legislation pertaining to humanitarian law;

- in Mali, introduced the teaching of humanitarian law at the University of Bamako and at 3 military academies;

- in cooperation with the Senegalese Red Cross and education authorities, organized humanitarian law awareness sessions for more than 1,800 schoolchildren in 15 schools in Ziguinchor, which included a showing of the “So Why?” film and the distribution of exercise books;

- promoted mine awareness among different target groups, especially in the Casamance region.

14 See pp. 340-341.
In Nigeria the year under review was marked by the death of two of the country's major political figures. On 8 June President Sani Abacha died of a heart attack and was replaced as head of State by General Abdulsalam Abubakar. On 20 July the latter announced the dissolution of all the transitional institutions set up by the previous administration, the lifting of restrictions on political activities and the creation of an independent National Electoral Commission. The task of the Commission, whose members were appointed in August by the Provisional Ruling Council, was to oversee the process of transition to civilian government, due to be installed on 29 May 1999. In late August, a detailed programme was issued scheduling regional elections, elections at state government level, national elections and then presidential elections between December 1998 and the end of February 1999. In general, the first stage of this electoral process ran smoothly and registered a high turnout; the PDP* won the regional elections. At the end of June the new Nigerian leader ordered the release of a number of security detainees, including the former head of State General Obasanjo. He had also promised to release other imprisoned opposition leaders, in particular Chief Moshood Abiola. However, the latter died of natural causes on 7 July before he could be freed.

When the death of Moshood Abiola was announced, riots erupted in the cities of Lagos, Ibadan (Oyo state) and Abeokuta (Ogun state). There were also clashes between members of the Yoruba and Hausa ethnic communities. To deal with the situation, the Nigerian Red Cross Society mobilized several hundred volunteers and gave first aid to around 700 casualties. Over the year several other states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria were affected by political, intercommunal and religious unrest.

In connection with the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula,\textsuperscript{15} the ICRC, on the basis of a list provided by the Cameroonian authorities,\textsuperscript{16} continued making representations to the Nigerian Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs with a view to obtaining information about Cameroonian servicemen who had gone missing during the conflict. In mid-May, the regional delegation handed the Foreign Ministry a newly updated list of

\textsuperscript{15} For an account of the representations made and activities undertaken on the Cameroonian side in relation to the Bakassi dispute in 1998, see Yaoundé, p. 86.


* PDP: People's Democratic Party
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- organized, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary and at the request of the parties to the conflict, the repatriation of 124 Nigerian nationals (87 POWs and 37 civilian internees) released by the Cameroonian authorities on 24 November;
- took part, jointly with the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission and Prison Service, in a workshop on human rights and the prison system in Nigeria, which was attended by 140 officials in charge of places of detention; funded the publication of a manual on the same subjects for use by those responsible for running Nigerian prisons;
- generally continued, in cooperation with Nigerian NGOs active in the field of human rights, to monitor detention-related issues in Nigeria;
- provided the Nigerian Red Cross with various supplies and logistic and financial support for its emergency activities in aid of communities affected by inter-communal clashes in Osun and Nassarawa states;
- distributed supplies (blankets, jerrycans, plates, cups, cooking pots), through the National Society, to 3,600 people affected by riots in Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta;
- provided support, in cooperation with the Nigerian Red Cross and the National Human Rights Commission, for the training of 21 team leaders from 7 National Society branches who were to be responsible for implementing a health and hygiene programme in Nigerian prisons; provided basic equipment for these volunteers;
- handed over first-aid supplies to the National Society's Abuja, Enugu and Anambra branches, and provided a vehicle and driver for the Abuja branch, in connection with their activities on the occasion of the Pope's visit to Nigeria;
- financed the repair of 8 of the National Society's vehicles;
- supplied general financial, material (mainly telecommunications) and logistic support for the activities conducted by the Nigerian Red Cross, particularly in the area of emergency preparedness, and provided liaison between the National Society and potential donors;
- covered the structural expenses of the National Society's dissemination department and the costs involved in producing publications;
- continued its cooperation with various Nigerian military academies, such as the National War College, the Warrant Officers' Academy and the Infantry Centre and School, for the dissemination of humanitarian law, holding sessions attended by a total of more than 330 representatives of the armed forces and police, members of the civilian authorities and some 15 foreign colonels;
- gave a presentation on humanitarian law for 40 members of the National Human Rights Commission;
- conducted a dissemination session for 25 volunteers from the Makurdi branch of the Nigerian Red Cross, within the framework of a training workshop organized by the National Society in cooperation with the Federation;
- contributed in general to spreading knowledge of and promoting respect for humanitarian law and the Red Cross principles among various groups (authorities, armed and security forces, the media, academic circles).
soldiers still unaccounted for, and at the end of September a note was sent to the Attorney General and the Minister of Justice requesting access to any Cameroonian nationals held in connection with the Bakassi dispute. In April the ICRC notified the Lagos government of the death of one of the Nigerian civilian internees being held in Cameroon and, at its request, arranged for repatriation of the body. There was a marked change in the attitude of the Nigerian authorities to humanitarian aspects of the Bakassi affair when General Abubakar came to power. Specifically, the authorities officially acknowledged that they were holding Cameroonian POWs and civilian internees and granted the ICRC permission to visit them; they later informed the ICRC of their wish to release these people without delay. The regional delegation was therefore able to visit 86 Cameroonian POWs and one civilian internee for the first time and to interview them in private just before their release by the Nigerian authorities on 24 November. They were repatriated to Cameroon under the auspices of the ICRC.

In the course of the year, the ICRC also pursued its contacts with ECOWAS with a view to signing a cooperation agreement with the organization. In advance of the adoption by the ECOWAS ministerial conference in late October of a draft text on the establishment of a mechanism for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts and for peace-keeping and security, the ICRC addressed a memorandum in mid-October to all ECOWAS member States and to the organization's Executive Secretary proposing that certain changes be made to the draft in favour of the principles and action of humanitarian organizations. These amendments were accepted by the ministerial conference and taken into account in the final version of the text.
Central Africa
BURUNDI

The endemic violence that has caused so much bloodshed in Burundi over the years abated to some extent in 1998, but fighting continued between armed groups and the Burundian armed forces and there were further attacks on civilians. These caused new population movements into Tanzania, as well as internal displacements.

Negotiations between all the parties to find a solution to the crisis went on in Arusha, Tanzania, under the mediation of the former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, but made only timid progress. The economic embargo imposed by Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda following the 1996 coup d'état remained in place, with occasional exceptions, notably to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Its impact on the economy was still considerable and it discouraged potential investors, thus putting a brake on the country’s development.

Despite the lull in hostilities, the consequences of the conflict for the civilian population were as dire as ever. Most of the estimated 520,000 people assembled since 1996 by the government in some 170 sites under army protection in central Burundi were still unable to return to their places of origin, as their homes and property had been destroyed or they feared for their safety. A further 600,000 remained in refugee camps in Tanzania. The conflict and the embargo continued to have severe repercussions on State services, in particular health and education, and on society in general.

The ICRC’s field activities in Burundi remained suspended throughout 1998, as had been the case since June 1996, when the murder of three delegates in the northern province of Cibitoke and threats made against other expatriates prompted the complete withdrawal of expatriate staff. As a result, the ICRC could not obtain first-hand information on the situation on the ground.

For the first half of the year, a delegate based in Nairobi travelled regularly to Bujumbura to keep in contact with the government authorities and advance the inquiry into the murder of the ICRC delegates. In July, the ICRC stationed an expatriate in the Burundian capital on a permanent basis in order to intensify its dialogue with the authorities and gain a more comprehensive picture of the humanitarian situation. In early November, the Delegate-General for Africa went to Bujumbura, where together with the head of delegation, he had meetings at the highest level. Following these discussions and an in-depth analysis of the situation, the ICRC decided to envisage a limited resumption of activities in 1999, in particular visits to detainees in central prisons and assessment of the needs of displaced people.

See the ICRC’s 1996 Annual Report, p.51.
Installed in Kinshasa following its accession to power in May 1997, the government of President Kabila struggled to consolidate its hold over the country in the face of mounting opposition from a number of different quarters. Former opponents of the Mobutu regime, frustrated at being excluded from the new government, continued to voice their dissatisfaction. In February, the integration into the new national army, the FAC,* of soldiers from the former Zairian armed forces led to tensions with Banyamulenge soldiers.

The mass return to Rwanda of Rwandan refugees at the end of 1996 did little to ease the tension in the eastern provinces. The situation in North and South Kivu in particular, long a hotbed of ethnic turmoil, became increasingly volatile as the year progressed, with numerous armed groups operating in the area and engaging in frequent clashes with the FAC. Meanwhile, unrest in the neighbouring Rwandan prefectures of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi18 continued to have a destabilizing effect on the whole region. Tension mounted further in July with the Congolese government’s decision to end its military cooperation agreement with Rwanda, which led to a serious deterioration in relations with its neighbours.

Things came to a head on 2 August when the RCD,* backed mainly by Rwanda and Uganda, launched a campaign to oust President Kabila. Fighting broke out in North and South Kivu before spreading quickly to neighbouring provinces and then to the area around Kinshasa. The RCD advance on the capital was finally checked by Angolan, Chadian, Namibian and Zimbabwean forces which moved in to support the government.

18 See pp. 80-85.
* FAC: Forces Armées Congolaises
* RCD: Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, a coalition of opposition groups
The RCD nonetheless maintained its pressure on the eastern provinces, conducting intensive military operations that gave it effective control over North and South Kivu, Eastern and Maniema provinces, including the towns of Kisangani, Kindu and Kalémie, and setting up an administration in the region. By the end of December, parts of northern Katanga, Kasai Oriental and eastern Equateur were also reportedly controlled by the rebel forces.

An increasing number of foreign rebel/guerrilla groups took advantage of the prevailing instability to become involved in the conflict on one side or the other. The presence of foreign forces on Congolese territory testified to the increasingly international nature of the conflict and threatened to destabilize the whole Central African region. International and regional diplomatic efforts to secure a cease-fire or reach a negotiated settlement proved unsuccessful.

The armed opposition's siege of the capital, which lasted several weeks in August, had significant psychological effects, as well as causing a shortage of essential supplies. Needs also increased in terms of medical assistance for the war-wounded.

In the longer term, the conflict dealt a severe blow to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's already ailing economy. The crisis caused a severe cash flow problem and economic activity came to a virtual standstill. Life for the majority of the Congolese population, precarious even before the conflict, became even more difficult.

One of the more worrying developments was the surge in ethnic tensions, which had been stirred up by the conflict, leading to attacks on specific ethnic groups. On all sides ethnic animosities ran high and numerous violations of international humanitarian law, targeting civilians in particular, were committed throughout the country.

The ICRC's activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998 can be divided into those which were under way before the outbreak of hostilities in August and those conducted in response to the new crisis.

Prior to the conflict, the ICRC was present throughout the country, although restrictions on humanitarian operations in North Kivu meant that the ICRC sub-delegation in Goma was managed by local staff under the supervision of expatriates travelling from Kinshasa. On 7 April the ICRC opened an office in Bunia, the main town of one of the districts situated along the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. Its main purpose was to work on a project to rehabilitate the water distribution system and to help Sudanese refugees living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo re-establish contact with their relatives by means of Red Cross messages.

After clashes broke out, the security situation steadily deteriorated. Several of the ICRC's vehicles were stolen in Uvira and Bukavu and its sub-delegation offices and delegates' residences were looted. As a result, the ICRC had to
suspend its activities for the best part of a month and evacuate its expatriate staff. Before leaving the ICRC handed over medical and first-aid material to its Congolese staff and to National Society volunteers to supply hospitals where possible.

The ICRC resumed a few specific programmes in Kivu within the month, although the situation had not completely returned to normal by the end of the year.

In the first seven months of the year the ICRC’s activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo mainly focused on assistance to specific vulnerable groups and on post-conflict rehabilitation work, notably health, agricultural and water-supply and sanitation programmes, with numerous projects delegated to participating National Societies.

By March, distributions of food and other assistance, seed and tools had helped improve the food security situation in Kivu and Eastern Province. Agricultural rehabilitation projects (seed multiplication projects, reforestation to prevent the erosion of arable land, irrigation of rice fields) were set up to help some 100,000 beneficiaries regain their self-sufficiency, while a variety of micro-projects (sewing workshops, soap manufacture) were in the pipeline with a view to enhancing economic security. Unfortunately, because of the conflict, the latter could not be implemented.

The ICRC’s health programmes prior to the conflict centred on support to selected hospitals and health centres in order to improve the quality of services, water-supply and sanitation systems, health education and access to health care. The two projects delegated to the Belgian and German Red Cross Societies in Kisangani (Kabondo) and Uvira continued until August. Work was well advanced when it had to be interrupted and the expatriate staff evacuated owing to the outbreak of hostilities.

The emphasis of water and sanitation programmes shifted away from supplying large-scale assistance in the form of water-treatment chemicals to the national water company, Regideso, as had been done in 1997, to providing technical assistance. The ICRC completed projects launched in late 1997 to rehabilitate water-distribution systems in Bukavu, Goma and Kisangani, continued with projects in North and South Kivu, Eastern, Equateur, Katanga and Maniema provinces and began a series of new projects aimed at improving the water supply to isolated communities and essential health facilities located in potential conflict areas.

To help the Regideso recover its operational capacity in regions affected by conflict, the ICRC delegated projects to the German, Netherlands, American, Australian and British Red Cross Societies to improve the water supply to a number of towns. Work was carried out on two fronts: first, damaged water-treatment

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See the ICRC’s 1997 Annual Report, p. 62.
stations were rehabilitated and a clean water supply was restored, and secondly, alternative water sources (wells and springs) were repaired or tapped for people without access to a piped supply.

All water and sanitation projects, with the exception of Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, had to be suspended in August owing to the conflict.

In Kinshasa, when the supply lines were cut off at the height of the fighting in August, the ICRC organized an emergency airlift of calcium hypochlorite and salt to remedy an acute shortage of water-treatment chemicals and to ensure that the infrastructure could continue to function without any loss in the quality of the water supply. Essential chemicals were also provided in the eastern provinces.

On 27 June, the ICRC and the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo officially inaugurated a new limb-fitting workshop in Kinshasa, further to a cooperation agreement signed by the two organizations in March. The ICRC supplied technical assistance, renovated the existing buildings and provided the services of an experienced prosthetic technician, who worked with a team of technicians and craftsmen from the National Society.

An unknown number of people were arrested for State security reasons following the change of government in May 1997. Despite repeated approaches to the new authorities with a view to regaining access to detainees on a nationwide basis, the ICRC made little progress on this issue in the first half of the year.

Following the outbreak of conflict in August, the ICRC immediately approached the relevant authorities and representatives of various ministries to request access to people captured during the fighting. These included Congolese detained for security reasons, Congolese and foreign civilians interned or detained for their own security, opposition combatants captured by Congolese armed forces and their allies, and prisoners of war on both sides held either in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or in neighbouring countries. On this occasion, the legal framework of international humanitarian law proved more acceptable to the authorities, and the ICRC was authorized to visit all persons detained by the government in connection with the conflict. On 18 August the ICRC began conducting visits, in accordance with its standard procedures, to people held at the Kokolo military base and in the following weeks at the Kinshasa Penitentiary and Rehabilitation Centre, as well as at other places of detention in the capital. On 5 October, the ICRC started its first visits to persons held in places of detention outside Kinshasa, beginning with Katanga province in the south-east.

On the basis of its findings during the visits, the ICRC made suggestions for improvements to the authorities. As the detaining authorities lacked the funds for the upkeep of the detainees, the ICRC regularly provided food and material

* OAU: Organization of African Unity
assistance, medicines and medical supplies. It also set up a special feeding pro-
gramme for malnourished prisoners in several places of detention and provided
the materials necessary to vaccinate detainees and staff in a central prison after
outbreaks of shigellosis and meningitis.

The ICRC also visited POWs and civilian internees specifically entitled to pro-
tection under the Geneva Conventions. Visits to POWs held under the responsi-
bility of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Uganda and Rwanda began in November.

With regard to detainees in the hands of the RCD, negotiations resulted in
written authorization granting access to all categories of persons held by the RCD
in Goma, Kisangani and Kindu, in both civilian and military places of detention.
Visits began in November.

At the beginning of the year, following an outbreak of cholera in the Kapalata
camp in Kisangani, the ICRC provided medical assistance to help the authorities
cope with the epidemic (at "Site H", the camp to which the people from Kapalata
camp were relocated when the latter closed). In the first weeks of the conflict,
when Kinshasa was under siege, the ICRC distributed emergency medical sup-
plies to hospitals in the capital and in Lubumbashi, all of which saw a large influx
of war-wounded. After assessing the needs of hospitals treating the war-wounded
in North and South Kivu, the ICRC increased its medical assistance to the referral
hospitals in Goma and to civilian hospitals in Bukavu and Uvira. It also provided
assistance to health centres treating displaced people in Goma.

The Uvira hospital, which prior to the conflict was assisted by the ICRC
through a project delegated to the German Red Cross, remained fully functional
during the fighting, and had sufficient stocks to last several months.

The ICRC supported the efforts of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic
of the Congo in Kivu by providing volunteers with blankets and stretchers for
evacuating the war-wounded and lime for burying the dead. With the help of the
National Society, assistance was also delivered to hospitals treating war casualties
in Kasangulu and Moanda in Bas-Congo province.

With a view to establishing a working relationship with the new authorities, the
ICRC adopted a three-pronged approach to dissemination in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo in 1998. First, contacts were established in order to build
confidence and improve understanding of the ICRC’s mission. Secondly, newly
hired and existing dissemination staff working for the ICRC throughout the coun-
try were trained and provided with the appropriate tools and a plan of action.
Thirdly, operational dissemination sessions were held for civil and military
authorities.

A campaign against misuse of the emblem which was intended to be conducted
nationwide only got as far as a pilot phase in Kisangani, where Red Cross volun-
teers removed – with the authorities’ consent – all red cross emblems used with-
out proper authorization.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 3,073 people deprived of their freedom in 13 places of detention in Kinshasa and Katanga; these included POWs, captured combatants, security detainees, civilian internees and civilians detained for their own safety; in the case of POWs, their whereabouts were notified to their respective countries of origin;

- visited 86 prisoners of war held by Zimbabwean forces in Kinshasa, 3 POWs held in Harare, 5 POWs held by Ugandan forces in Kisangani and 15 POWs held in a neighbouring country;

- visited 41 security detainees in 7 places of detention in Goma;

- supplied 95.3 tonnes of food (cereal, beans, oil and salt) and 9.8 tonnes of material assistance (plates, cups, blankets, soap, jerrycans and cleaning and hygiene products) to detainees held in Kinshasa and Katanga;

- monitored the living conditions of detainees and carried out improvements to basic hygiene facilities in order to maintain health standards;

- in February, at the request of the authorities, provided chlorine, cleaning materials, medical supplies and rehydration salts for detainees at the Kinshasa Penitentiary and Rehabilitation Centre following an outbreak of cholera;

- exchanged 1,053 Red Cross messages on behalf of detainees and their families;

- exchanged 34,351 Red Cross messages on behalf of family members separated by the conflict;

- opened 439 tracing cases and resolved 53;

- set up a radio tracing network operated by the National Society in regions inaccessible to the ICRC for security reasons;

- reunited 709 unaccompanied Congolese children with their parents and repatriated 55 unaccompanied Rwandan children;

- before the conflict, provided 279.2 tonnes of food and 202.2 tonnes of material assistance to more than 58,000 internally displaced people in the east, and 26,099 hoes and 83.5 tonnes of seed for agricultural rehabilitation;

- following the conflict, distributed 155.9 tonnes food and 32.7 tonnes of material assistance to some 5,600 displaced and vulnerable families;

- prior to the conflict, provided medicines and medical equipment on an ad hoc basis to hospitals and health centres treating the war-wounded or assisting displaced people in North and South Kivu; rehabilitated health centres and upgraded water-supply and sanitation facilities where necessary;
- delivered food and medicines for patients in the Kisangani general hospital and carried out sanitation and rehabilitation work;
- until August, through a project delegated to the Belgian Red Cross, carried out repairs and developed primary health care services in 7 of the 18 health centres in the Kabando health district serving 152,000 inhabitants;
- until August, through a project delegated to the German Red Cross, rehabilitated the Uvira hospital with the aim to re-establish it as the region's referral hospital, provided the services of an expatriate medical/surgical team and gave seminars for health professionals on surgery, anaesthetics, pharmacy management, hospital hygiene and laboratory techniques; the hospital admitted 3,862 patients, performed 789 operations and treated 4,041 outpatients;
- after the outbreak of the conflict, in coordination with the health authorities, assisted 3 hospitals in Kinshasa (Kinshasa general hospital and the military hospitals at Kokolo camp and Ceta camp), which treated the war-wounded, provided material support to some 15 first-aid posts run by the National Society, and supported 4 hospitals in Lubumbashi, which also treated war casualties;
- at the newly opened Kalembe-Lembe workshop, together with the National Society, fitted 66 patients with artificial limbs and produced 68 prostheses;
- improved the water supply to hospitals and health centres in the districts of Mwenga (20,000 beneficiaries), Idjwi island (32,000 beneficiaries), Walungu (20,000 beneficiaries) and Kabare (6,000 beneficiaries);
- continued to provide water and sanitation facilities for displaced people and refugees at reception centres in Uvira and Goma;
- carried out rural water-supply and health programmes in the districts of Walungu (30,000 beneficiaries) and Idjwi island (2,000 beneficiaries);
- carried out sanitation work at the Kinshasa general hospital, with the rehabilitation/construction of toilets, showers and a waste-disposal system for 2 wards, repairs on the incinerator building and rehabilitation of the booster station;
- until August, by means of a project delegated to the Australian Red Cross, fitted 75 wells with hand-pumps and protected 47 springs in the Ruzizi plain and south of Uvira and organized 15 performances of a play promoting better understanding of water, sanitation and health issues for schools and communes in the area;
- until August, by means of projects delegated to the German, American, Dutch and British Red Cross Societies, improved the water supply in Kindu, Lubumbashi/Likasi, Buta and Bunia respectively;
- during the emergency phase, in order to prevent an interruption in water delivery, installed bladder tanks and distribution ramps at 2 hospitals, 2 health centres and 2 military hospitals in Kinshasa and supplied them by tanker truck;
- following the outbreak of hostilities, distributed 40 tonnes of calcium hypochlorite and 13 tonnes of salt to ensure that the infrastructure could continue to function and to prevent a loss in the quality of the water supply;
- supplied the electricity board with emergency materials to repair the high-tension lines supplying Kinshasa, thus guaranteeing the delivery of the voltage required for the water-treatment plants to function;
- provided 33 tonnes of food to the National Society's community kitchen at "Site H", for more than 1,500 patients at Kisangani general hospital transferred from Kapalata camp;
in cooperation with the National Society, gave basic dissemination sessions and first-aid training for some 100 stretcher-bearers from the government armed forces;
- supported the National Society's emergency response teams; inaugurated 16 new first-aid posts, organized 104 courses for first-aiders and distributed 450 first-aid kits and 85 bicycles;
- supported the National Society's efforts to promote Red Cross principles and activities and raise health and hygiene awareness; to this end, informal dissemination sessions were organized for 58,200 people; 145 plays were performed for 32,000 people on health awareness, AIDS and Red Cross activities and 42 sites were cleaned;
- provided the National Society with structural support in the form of basic office equipment, 4-wheel-drive vehicles and the rehabilitation of local offices;
- set up 5 containers to serve as offices in Boma, Gombe, Lubumbashi and Ngada, thereby providing bases for the National Society and its volunteers to respond to emergencies in surrounding areas;
- together with the Federation and the National Society, worked on a proposal to modify the statutes of the National Society;

- organized information sessions on the ICRC and its mandate and dissemination events for some 26,500 representatives of the civilian and military authorities, combatants, university students and staff of the ICRC, the National Society and NGOs;
- organized a series of 10 dissemination sessions in the Ndjili, Kimbaseke and Masina communes of Kinshasa for more than 1,200 young people who had taken part in clashes with the armed opposition;
- maintained contacts with both international news agencies and the local media in order to promote awareness of the ICRC's role and activities in the country; produced standard information packs on ICRC activities; produced a 45-minute television special on ICRC water and sanitation projects.
On a number of occasions following the outbreak of hostilities, the ICRC reminded those taking part in the conflict of their obligation to abide by international humanitarian law. On 19 August, the ICRC publicly appealed to all the parties to respect humanitarian law and to refrain from targeting objects indispensable to the survival of the population, such as drinking water installations and supplies, food and food transports. In September, the ICRC met the RCD's "ministers for health and home affairs" and handed over a memorandum urging respect for humanitarian law. A memorandum was also submitted to all the countries whose forces were involved in the conflict: Angola, Chad, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

During the conflict, the ICRC succeeded in re-establishing contact with the country's highest authorities, including the Chief of Staff of the armed forces and military security forces, with a view to enhancing the protection of detainees and promoting the basic rules of humanitarian law within the armed forces.

As part of its ongoing support to governments in developing national measures for the implementation of humanitarian law, the ICRC approached the Constitutional Commission in May requesting that a reference to the Geneva Conventions be included in the draft Constitution of the Third Republic.
Devastated by two conflicts in recent years, in 1993-4 and again in 1997, the Republic of the Congo began the year in a state of precarious stability. In January the government initiated a process of national reconciliation, and a three-year period was set for the country’s transition to democracy. A law to prosecute those accused of genocide and crimes against humanity was adopted by the parliament at the end of August. Throughout the year, Angolan forces, which had intervened during the conflict in 1997, maintained a presence in the country’s main towns of Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Dolisie.

Efforts made by the authorities to disarm the militias had little effect on the endemic insecurity in the capital and other parts of the country. In the south-west and the southern outskirts of Brazzaville, strongholds of exiled opposition leaders Pascal Lissouba and Bernard Kolelas, armed groups refused to surrender their weapons and there were sporadic outbreaks of violence. In April, in the southern region of Bouenza, armed elements took control of the country’s main hydroelectric dam for six weeks, disrupting the power supply to densely populated southern areas, including Pointe-Noire, the country’s economic hub, and severing rail links with Brazzaville, before a negotiated settlement was reached.

The security situation in the southern Pool prefecture deteriorated considerably in the last few months of the year. Attacks by Ninja militias on Congolese security forces in the larger towns of Kindamba, Goma Tsétsé and Kinkala and in surrounding villages forced thousands to flee into the bush, to Brazzaville or to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Dozens of civilians lost their lives, while others were subjected to brutal treatment by both sides.

In mid-December, the troubles spread to southern districts of Brazzaville (Makelelekele and Bacao), inhabited mainly by civilians originating from the south-western regions, and to the Bouenza prefecture. The resulting large-scale
military operations in the affected districts of the capital caused more than 200,000 persons to flee, mostly to the Pool prefecture and to a lesser extent to northern Brazzaville, where they found shelter in public buildings, schools, churches and private houses. According to official sources, more than 400 people were killed in the violence, and the general insecurity in Makelekele and Bacongo prevented displaced civilians from returning home. Private houses and public installations were looted or destroyed in the areas affected by the fighting. State employees (including health personnel) fled their places of work, and public life came to a total standstill in the rest of Brazzaville.

The food situation in the capital became increasingly critical and prices of basic commodities and fuel doubled over the last three months of the year. The supply of goods from Pointe-Noire was disrupted, and the border with Kinshasa remained closed most of the time as of the beginning of August.

At the beginning of February, the ICRC delegation in Brazzaville became independent from the former ICRC regional delegation in Kinshasa. Owing to the conflict, the ICRC remained the lead agency for organizing the Movement’s coordinated response to needs, while the Federation continued to assume its lead role in relation to the institutional development of the Congolese Red Cross.

Humanitarian needs declined steadily in the early part of the year and the ICRC was able to phase out some of its emergency programmes, such as supplying food, material and medical assistance to health facilities. Although other aid agencies began to withdraw their staff as of April, the ICRC stayed on in order to develop water-supply and sanitation projects, agricultural rehabilitation, protection of and visits to detainees, promotion of humanitarian law and cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross.

At the end of March, as the overall health situation had returned to its pre-conflict status, the ICRC handed back management of 15 of the 19 integrated health centres (CSI*) in Brazzaville to UNICEF and Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, which were responsible for running the centres before the conflict. Support for the remaining CSI was to be provided by Brazzaville’s Central Pharmacy. Repairs on four other badly damaged health centres was completed in July.

Emergency material assistance to the worst-affected quarters of Brazzaville also ended in March. In its stead, the ICRC launched a new programme for the most vulnerable groups in the capital, in close cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross. It also continued to assist workers and their families through food-for-work programmes, and to provide support for social welfare institutions.

With the Congolese postal services functioning once again, the Red Cross message service between Brazzaville and other countries was suspended at the

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* CSI: Centre de santé intégré
beginning of May. Nevertheless, Congolese abroad were still able to use Red Cross messages to trace family members in Brazzaville with whom they had lost contact since the conflict.

Driven before the ADFL* advance on Kinshasa in May 1997, some 12,000 Rwandan refugees had crossed over into the Republic of the Congo, settling in camps along the border. In the process they lost all means of communication with their relatives and some children were separated from their families. In mid-July 1998 the Red Cross message service was extended to the entire Rwandan refugee community, enabling them to contact family members with whom they had lost touch.

In the first half of the year, the ICRC continued to help the SNDE* bring installations damaged during the 1997 conflict back into operation through maintenance and logistic assistance to the SNDE in Brazzaville and the north of the country. Once the worst of the conflict-related problems had been resolved, the ICRC discontinued its assistance but remained on hand in case of emergency. In mid-September the ICRC signed an agreement with the SNDE to rehabilitate its central maintenance workshop, which had been damaged and looted during the 1997 conflict. Work was completed by the end of the year.

In May and June respectively, the ICRC and the SNDE signed agreements with the authorities of the Plateaux and Cuvette regions, for rehabilitation of the water-treatment plants in the regional capitals, Owando and Djambala. The Owando plant became operational at the end of August.

The ICRC continued to supply water by truck to the Kintele camp for Rwandan refugees until the end of the year, when the task was handed over to UNHCR.

A number of people were arrested in connection with the 1997 conflict or for security reasons. Following the events, the ICRC made representations at the highest level with a view to visiting places of detention. A formal proposal, drafted in cooperation with government consultants, was submitted to the government in mid-May. Although the ICRC received positive signals with regard to this proposal, the signing of the document was postponed because of the outbreak of hostilities in December.

The ICRC concentrated its efforts on resuming its dissemination programme for the armed forces, on hold since May 1996. In September, an offer of technical support for the incorporation of humanitarian law in instruction programmes for the armed forces at all levels, including new recruits, was formally accepted.

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* ADFL: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
* SNDE: Société Nationale de Distribution d’Eau, the national water board
kept up its efforts to obtain access to all detainees falling within its mandate;

established a network to collect allegations of excesses perpetrated by armed elements against the civilian population in Brazzaville, with a view to discussing the problems identified with the relevant authorities on a confidential basis;

exchanged 4,763 Red Cross messages between Brazzaville and various destinations, some of which were from and for Rwandan refugees;

reunited 95 unaccompanied Congolese children with close relatives; registered 300 unaccompanied Rwandan children;

distributed 284.2 tonnes of food (rice, beans, vegetable oil and salt) to 70,000 beneficiaries, including families taking part in food-for-work programmes, institutions for the disabled, unaccompanied children, street children and social welfare cases;

donated 255 kg of seed, agricultural implements and 400 tonnes of food to 3 agricultural cooperatives around Brazzaville to help the population regain its self-sufficiency; provided 20 agricultural cooperatives with a total of 100 wheelbarrows;

provided 3,500 families with vegetable seed kits and hoes to enable them to resume market gardening; supplied a stock of 100 kg of soya seed to replenish the seed bank of the Centre de Vulgarisation des Techniques Agricoles in Brazzaville;

under food-for-work programmes, had several fishponds and 3 lakes which had been plundered during the conflict cleaned and restocked with tilapia;

up to March, in close cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross, supplied 11,900 non-food kits (each comprising a tarpaulin, jerrycan, cooking pot, 2 blankets and 1 kg soap) to 89,000 people whose houses had been damaged or destroyed during the conflict in 1997; distributed 2,806 similar kits to 15,700 beneficiaries, including unaccompanied children, street children and the disabled;

up to the end of March, provided regular medical assistance to 14 health centres and ad hoc supplies to a further 5;

rehabilitated 23 health centres heavily damaged during the 1997 conflict; provided cleaning products and furniture and cleaned the premises in cooperation with the Congolese Red Cross;

in November, provided assistance (soap, blankets, jerrycans and dressing kits) for the treatment of 30 wounded in the Kinkala and Vindza health centres;

following the renewed hostilities in December, carried out 52 emergency medical evacuations from camps for displaced people, and Makelekele and Bacongo;

transported more than 200 exhausted, weak or sick people emerging from hiding in the bush for their return to Brazzaville;

from mid-December, assisted the 3 main hospitals in Brazzaville (university teaching hospital, the military hospital and the Talangai hospital) caring for war casualties and 3 ad hoc health facilities for displaced people staying temporarily in the Kinsoundi and Kingouari regions; distributed according to its own priorities medicines and medical supplies donated by WHO, UNICEF, Caritas and other humanitarian agencies;

supplied tools, machinery protection equipment and other materials to rehabilitate and support the two key water-treatment plants in Brazzaville (Djiri and Djoué), which produced 70,000,000 litres a day for 80% of the city's population;

provided some 250 tonnes of chemicals and laboratory equip-
ment to the Djiri and Djoué plants to improve the quality of drinking water and facilitate quality control, and provided 20 tonnes of plumbing equipment to allow major repairs to the heavily damaged water-distribution system;
- gave food for work to 80 SNDE technicians who were still not receiving salaries;
- completed the rehabilitation of the SNDE's central maintenance workshop, comprising reconstruction of 7 workshops, together with their electrical, plumbing and compressed air networks, and replacement of most of the looted tools and equipment;
- in March, provided the national electricity board with transport to enable it to replace and reconnect a 2-km-long cable to restore power to the Djiri water plant after a 3-week interruption in supply;
- continued to provide drinking water to 22 places in Brazzaville as needed and regularly supplied water by tanker truck (a total of 13,000,000 litres) to the Rwandan refugee camp at Kintele until the end of December, when this task was handed over to UNHCR;
- dug 4 new boreholes and equipped them with hand-pumps for the population of south Brazzaville not connected to the mains network;
- carried out a survey of the water-distribution network and hygiene conditions in Pointe-Noire in order to find the cause of the high incidence of diarrhoea in the city;
- constructed a 25,000-litre reservoir in Pointe-Noire, and installed ground protection devices for 13 boreholes supplying the town;
- in response to a cholera outbreak in Pointe-Noire, constructed a 25,000-litre reservoir and 2 double latrines and carried out other plumbing and repair work in the Tie-Tie hospital;
- provided technical materials for the Owando and Djambala water-treatment plants in the northern regions, rehabilitated damaged structures, repaired or replaced equipment and supplied 20 SNDE workers with food for work;
- in December, installed 2 collapsible storage tanks and 24 water taps at the university teaching hospital, supplied clean water to 2 hospitals and installed generators to enable their operating theatres to function;
- installed 15 collapsible storage tanks and water taps for over 30,000 people displaced by the disturbances who had settled in parts of north Brazzaville, provided 210,000 litres of clean water to 11 camps for displaced people and built 75 pit latrines at sites for the displaced;
- supplied the civil security service with disinfection and sanitation materials (gloves, body bags, blankets, masks, lime and chlorine) for collection of the dead in troubled areas;
- in April, together with the Federation, financed and took part in a meeting of 40 members of the Congolese Red Cross Central Committee, during which a programme of National Society activities in 1998 was approved;
- jointly with other components of the Movement, conducted a training programme for 13 future trainers of Congolese Red Cross first-aid volunteers;
- rehabilitated the former offices of the Congolese Red Cross in Brazzaville for use by the National Society's national headquarters and communal branch, which had to move out of their premises for security reasons;
- in May, organized an information conference on humanitarian law for 50 high-ranking officers from the Ministry of Defence and the military academy;
- organized an ad hoc dissemination session for 5 officers and 80 non-commissioned officers during a military training course in mid-September;
- held a 3-day workshop in November for 17 officers responsible for training within the armed forces, gendarmerie and police and followed this up with a 5-day "train the trainers" seminar for 37 officers;
- held 11 dissemination sessions for a total of 2,200 young recruits (former militiamen);
- in mid-December, conducted a seminar for 37 instructors of the Congolese armed and security forces and senior officials of the Ministry of Defence to train the trainers of humanitarian law;
- conducted dissemination sessions for university professors and students interested in international law;
- when the violence broke out during the second half of December, produced and broadcast 2 radio spots to explain the ICRC's emergency operations and to raise awareness among all bearers of weapons of the need to respect Red Cross personnel and property.
- organized several refresher courses for Red Cross volunteers working with displaced people.
October, sessions began throughout the country to familiarize young recruits (former militiamen) with the ICRC’s mandate, Red Cross activities and the basic rules of behaviour during armed conflict. Two seminars were also held under the agreement before the end of the year, one for members of the Chief of Staff’s office and the other for instructors. The ICRC also established contacts with the gendarmerie and the police force with a view to initiating a dissemination programme for these units. As regards civil society, the delegation approached the Faculty of Law of the Marien Ngouabi National University and the Université Libre du Congo in order to encourage the introduction of a course in humanitarian law, and donated a standard set of reference books to both universities.

As disturbances spread throughout the Pool region from the end of September, the ICRC provided support for local health facilities caring for the sick and wounded. After negotiating with the relevant authorities, delegates gained access to more than 10,000 displaced people stranded in two sites (Kinsoundi and Kingouari) in the troubled Makelekele area of Brazzaville. Food, material assistance and medical supplies were dispensed to displaced people in the capital’s northern neighbourhoods. On 21 December, the ICRC flew in two loads of urgently needed medical supplies to treat the wounded who were arriving in Brazzaville’s hospitals. Congolese Red Cross volunteers, working with the Federation’s support, dispensed first aid and transported the wounded to hospital. Following a survey by an ICRC team to determine protection and assistance priorities, daily convoys were set up to supply displaced people with water and medicines, as well as to provide them with a degree of protection.
A climate of insecurity continued to reign in some parts of Rwanda in 1998. At the beginning of the year armed groups made slow but significant progress, expanding their insurgency campaign from their strongholds in the Ruhengeri and Gisenyi prefectures in the north-west into southern and central areas. Attacks on villages and ambushes of vehicles claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians. Reprisals were often equally brutal. By mid-year, the situation appeared to be on the turn. The RPA* carried out massive counter-insurgency operations in Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, forcing the armed opposition to retreat. A number of combatants surrendered, while many others were killed during the fighting.

At the end of July, tension increased between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo when the latter put an end to the two countries' military cooperation agreement. When an internal conflict broke out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August, 20 Rwandan support for the Congolese opposition forces put further strain on relations with its neighbour.

Although many parts of the country enjoyed relative calm, the Rwandan population as a whole was still suffering the after-effects of the 1994 genocide. Furthermore, the country's poverty continued to permeate every aspect of life, including State structures, which did not have the resources to provide essential services to the population.

In 1998 the number of detainees, which had been steadily rising since 1994, stabilized and even registered a slight decline, although around 124,000 people were still in custody. There were fewer new arrests and more releases on humanitarian grounds (the sick and very old). Inmates held in some communal lock-ups

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* RPA: Rwandan Patriotic Army

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numbers of detainees stable, conditions worsen

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See p. 64.
(cachots) were freed or transferred to central prisons. This, however, exacerbated the already crowded conditions in the latter. Kitchen facilities in particular were overstretched, and the incidence of diseases such as tuberculosis and typhus rose. Malnutrition continued to be a source of concern, especially among detainees transferred from the lock-ups, who were generally in a poor state of health. Meanwhile, conditions remained precarious in lock-ups still housing detainees, where overcrowding, insufficient food, water and medical care and poor hygiene were the cause of many deaths.

The ICRC kept up its visits to all detainees held in connection with the conflict and the 1994 genocide, with the exception of those held in regions inaccessible to the organization. As in previous years, the prison authorities had neither the means nor the funds to deal with the scale of the problems encountered. The ICRC was therefore obliged to provide the assistance needed to preserve the lives, health and dignity of the detainees. At the request of the Ministry of Justice, the ICRC covered just under 60% of the food requirements of the country’s prisons; in the last three months of the year this was increased to full rations. It also supplied nutritional supplements, life-saving medicines and basic hygiene items to both prisons and lock-ups. ICRC water and sanitation projects provided an adequate water supply and proper waste disposal for several prisons and the neighbouring population.

The priority for the tracing service remained family reunifications for children separated from their parents during the mass repatriations in November 1996, following which over 28,000 unaccompanied children were registered. By the end of 1998, 87% of them had been reunited with close relatives. In June, a third album was published in conjunction with UNICEF containing photos of children too young to give any information about their identity or the whereabouts of their families. Since the launch of the programme in May 1997, the photos of a total of 1,655 unidentified children had been circulated in this way, and as a result some 700 children had been reunited with family members.

Most of the Red Cross messages exchanged in 1998 were on behalf of unaccompanied children, with a view to restoring family links. The network was also available to civilians or detainees wishing to correspond with relatives abroad, but the number of messages handled decreased as compared with previous years.

The violence and killings in the northern and western districts prompted many people to seek refuge in safer communes nearby. In an initiative begun in July by the Rwandan army, an estimated 500,000 people were assembled in camps. By the end of the year, some of these civilians were allowed to leave the camps and resettle near their fields, but not in their former homes. By implementing this policy the...
government aimed to encourage these people to build new houses, grouped in villages, and end their traditional scattered way of life.

Although the fighting had abated and there were fewer attacks on civilians in the second half of the year, insecurity remained high in the north-west. Relief agencies assisting displaced or resettled people had to use army escorts for their own security. Under such circumstances, the ICRC deemed that the conditions for independent action were not fulfilled and it was therefore not in a position to survey needs in the region or to take part in relief operations, which were essentially led by the UN and NGOs. Nevertheless, the ICRC provided ad hoc food aid for some 20,000 displaced people in those regions it could reach.

The ICRC continued to concentrate its efforts on assisting the most vulnerable among the survivors of the 1994 genocide. Although poverty was rife throughout Rwanda and needs enormous among all sectors of the population, this group, estimated at about 150,000 people, remained the hardest hit and the least likely to receive assistance from other sources. All had witnessed the massacres, including the murder of relatives and friends. Many were profoundly traumatized by the events and still bore physical and psychological wounds. Following the repatriation of refugees in 1996/1997, large numbers were displaced by returnees reclaiming their land and homes. They moved to sub-standard sites, living in partially constructed houses, collective centres or temporary shelters, without adequate access to basic services.

The ICRC’s programmes for this vulnerable group mainly targeted widows, orphans and disabled and elderly people. Assistance was provided via local associations and included food, non-food supplies, training and materials for agriculture, livestock-breeding, income-generation and house repairs. The aim was to set up projects that would provide beneficiaries with a sustainable source of income or would help them on their way to self-sufficiency. In 1998 the programmes included supplying sewing machines, fabrics and furniture to enable orphans to learn a skill on leaving school; canoes, nets, rope and oil lamps to teach 400 schoolchildren and 150 unemployed youths between the ages of 10 and 19 how to fish; and seed, fertilizer, pesticides and agricultural tools to a group of widows who had turned to cultivating the land. The ICRC also contributed to the repair of houses damaged in the conflict by supplying roof tiles, doors and windows, while the occupants carried out the work themselves.

By 1998, most health facilities had been rehabilitated and were functioning once again and the number of qualified Rwandan medical staff had increased with the return of refugees and the arrival of new graduates from medical and nursing schools. It was difficult for the ICRC to assess the health situation in the areas to which it did not have access. Although only half the medical facilities in these areas were reported to be functioning, all the district hospitals treating the wounded remained open. The ICRC provided the hospitals in Gisenyi, Gitarama
and Ruhengeri with medical supplies upon request. In cooperation with the German and Swiss Red Cross Societies, it kept up its support for the Kibuye district hospital by providing an expatriate medical team, supplying essential medicines and medical equipment and paying the salaries and overtime of all hospital staff.

The ICRC continued its programmes designed to restore or provide a reliable water supply in both urban and rural communities. A survey was conducted to determine the need for the rehabilitation and improvement of water-supply systems in repatriation/resettlement areas. The systems had been damaged during the events of 1994 or just afterwards, when no management or supervision was in place, and the relevant authorities still lacked sufficient financial and/or human resources to restore the supply to pre-1994 standards. Of the six places visited, three were considered a priority and projects were implemented straight away.

Given the country's recent history, the blatant disregard shown for human life and the prevailing insecurity, promoting compliance with humanitarian rules, spreading awareness of general humanitarian principles and raising the profile of the ICRC and the Red Cross remained an essential task in Rwanda. The field officers who formed part of the network set up for this purpose received continuous training and guidelines were established. Following a report on the ICRC’s image in Rwanda, greater emphasis was placed on increasing the capacity of all ICRC and Rwandan Red Cross staff to include dissemination in their day-to-day activities and on promoting humanitarian law within the Rwandan military.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 112,807 detainees in 130 places of detention and registered 11,526;
- exchanged 20,218 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families;
- provided 11,065.7 tonnes of food and 186.2 tonnes of high-protein biscuits to detainees in civilian prisons and lock-ups; in Kibuye, set up 2 kitchens serving 4 meals a week to inmates;
- distributed 221 tonnes of material assistance, including plates, cups and bowls, plastic sheeting, blankets, jerrycans, soap and cleaning products, to improve living and sanitary conditions in prisons and lock-ups;
- monitored the health conditions of detainees and regularly supplied basic medicines and vitamins/minerals; provided 213.2 tonnes of high-protein milk powder for severely malnourished detainees as part of a therapeutic feeding programme;
- monitored the nutritional status of inmates in lock-ups to assess the impact of the high-protein biscuits programme; donated kits containing basic drugs to local dispensaries caring for detainees in lock-ups;
- provided 80,000 litres of water on a daily basis to Rilima prison and to Butare, Kigali and Byumba prisons when technical problems arose with the water supply;

began building a water-treatment and pumping station to tackle Rilima's water-supply problem on a long-term basis;
- provided technical advice, assistance and materials to rehabilitate or improve kitchen facilities in all 19 civilian prisons;
- rehabilitated 77 lock-ups, modifying doors and windows to enhance light and ventilation, repairing roofs, cementing floors, digging latrines, fixing gutters to collect rainwater and providing tanks to store it;
- continued to centralize data on over 10,000 unaccompanied children and, together with other international and non-governmental organizations, carried out 4,053 family reunifications, bringing the total to 63,749 since the programme began in 1994;
- exchanged 8,450 Red Cross messages on behalf of unaccompanied children and between civilians and relatives abroad;
- distributed 1,517.5 tonnes of food and 134 tonnes of material assistance to displaced and needy people throughout Rwanda;
- supported micro-projects implemented by local associations for survivors of the genocide, distributing food and material assistance throughout Rwanda;
- up to March, provided 11,450 schoolchildren in 25 schools with 690 tonnes of food in cooperation with the Federation, which provided the transport, and the National Society, which coordinated the distribution;
- provided occasional assistance amounting to 755 tonnes of food and 7 tonnes of other supplies to 9,000 displaced people in the Gitarama prefecture;

- in cooperation with the German and Swiss Red Cross Societies, delivered medical assistance to Kibuye district hospital (over the year 702 patients admitted, 1,422 operations performed and 22,384 outpatient consultations given);
- provided ad hoc assistance to medical facilities treating the war-wounded;
- by means of a project delegated to the Swiss Red Cross, ran a limb-fitting workshop in Gatagara for disabled people and amputees, provided the services of an expatriate technician and a physiotherapist and trained local staff in the production of prosthetic/orthotic appliances and physiotherapy; in all, the workshop fitted 207 new patients with prostheses and orthoses and manufactured 67 prostheses, 240
- orthoses and 151 pairs of crutches;  
- engaged in technical and material cooperation with the national water, gas and electricity board, Electrogaz, to allow rehabilitation and/or upgrading of water catchments and pumping stations, improve storage capacity and to upgrade distribution networks, and carried out work on 16 water projects in Kigali, Gitarama, Kibuye, Mt Huye (Butare), Nyanza and Kibungo;  
- addressed water-supply and sanitation problems in rural areas, by tapping springs, installing stand-pipes for small farming communities and rehabilitating distribution networks;  
- carried out 8 quick-impact projects for the benefit of orphans, widows, hospitals and schools whose water-supply and sanitation systems had been destroyed during the conflict;  
- delivered 120,000 litres of water by truck to 4 orphanages in Kigali;  
- maintained support to the Rwandan Red Cross in the area of dissemination and training, and carried out joint activities to mark Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May;  
- trained 20 Rwandan Red Cross volunteers and staff to help build the National Society's dissemination capacity;  
- held discussions with the Rwandan Red Cross with a view to setting up a tracing service within the National Society and trained branch secretaries in tracing techniques;  
- initiated discussions with the RPA in order to develop a plan of instruction in the law of war within the force;  
- in December, conducted the first training session under the plan of action agreed with the military authorities, during which 760 senior and non-commissioned officers were taught the basics of the law of armed conflict;  
- through its network of field officers, conducted over 300 seminars for more than 28,000 people, including Rwandan Red Cross volunteers, local authorities, schoolchildren and members of the general public;  
- organized internal training courses for some 700 expatriate and locally hired ICRC staff;  
- maintained regular contacts with the media and encouraged coverage of its activities in Rwanda by the local press, radio and television;  
- with the Rwandan Red Cross, jointly sponsored 2 mobile exhibitions on Red Cross activities, which attracted a total of around 10,000 visitors;  
- began using theatre to promote humanitarian principles, organizing 2 performances of the play The Reunificator for over 500 people.
YAOUNDÉ
Regional delegation
(Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe)

The countries covered by the Yaoundé regional delegation enjoyed relative stability in 1998, with the exception of Equatorial Guinea and Chad, where there were outbreaks of intercommunal violence.

In connection with the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria over the Bakassi peninsula,22 the International Court of Justice in The Hague, to which the case was submitted by Cameroon in 1994, declared in June that it was competent to rule on the matter. Developments took a positive turn on 24 November with the simultaneous release and repatriation – under the auspices of the ICRC acting as a neutral intermediary at the request of both parties – of 211 Nigerian and Cameroonian prisoners of war and civilian internees. Prior to this, the ICRC had continued to visit and furnish assistance to Nigerian POWs and civilian internees held by Cameroon on a regular basis throughout the year; it had not, however, been successful in resuming the exchange of Red Cross messages between these detainees and their families.23 On account of the temporary suspension of its visits in 1997,24 and following a survey carried out in December of that year, the ICRC set up a nutrition programme for these detainees during the first three months of 1998. The ICRC also maintained contact with the families of Cameroonianians who had gone missing during the conflict and continued providing them with material aid.

Finally, following an assessment of the needs of communities displaced as a result of the Bakassi dispute, the ICRC brought its relief programme to a close. In the course of the year final distributions of food and other supplies were carried out. The ICRC also stepped up its representations to the Cameroonian authorities with a view to gaining access to people detained for security reasons. On the basis of information gathered from civil society in Cameroon, and following a round of consultations with the ministries and departments concerned, on 3 July the Yaoundé regional delegation sent the general secretariat of the Cameroonian presidency an offer of services to visit this category of detainees. An affirmative reply was received at the beginning of December.

22 For an account of the representations made and activities undertaken on the Nigerian side in relation to the Bakassi dispute, see Lagos, pp. 60-62.
23 See the ICRC’s 1997 Annual Report, p. 78.
24 Ibid.
In Equatorial Guinea, violent clashes broke out on the island of Bioko in January between government security forces and members of a separatist movement. These events claimed a number of victims among the civilian population and government troops and resulted in the arrest of some 400 people, 117 of whom were sentenced by a military tribunal in June. The ICRC's activities in Equatorial Guinea were also affected. Since it was not permitted to interview detainees without witnesses, it was obliged to suspend a third round of visits to places of detention in March, although the visits had been arranged with the authorities long in advance. The ICRC immediately made representations to the ministries concerned and to the presidency with a view to resuming its humanitarian activities in the country; negotiations continued for the rest of the year, but to no avail.

In the Central African Republic, 1998 saw a return to peace in the capital Bangui, although tensions persisted in several of the country's regions. The MISAB* contingent was replaced on 15 April by MINURCA,* a UN peacekeeping force, whose mandate was extended on two occasions in 1998. An agreement providing for the reintegration of army mutineers and the setting-up of a non-military government was signed at the close of a national reconciliation conference. An electoral commission was also set up, and two rounds of legislative elections were held on 22 November and 13 December. The ICRC signed a headquarters agreement with the Central African government on 25 February.

In Chad there was renewed violence between government forces and FARF* combatants in the south of the country in March and April. An agreement between the government and the FARF was, however, signed in May. After having submitted a plan of action to the Prime Minister, the ICRC travelled to the area where the incidents had taken place to assess the situation, and subsequently submitted a report to the Chadian authorities on problems affecting the civilian population in the region. It also reiterated its offer to the Ministry of Defence to step up dissemination of international humanitarian law among the armed forces.

In view of the involvement of the Chadian army in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ICRC sent a memorandum to the highest authorities in N'Djamena, reminding them of the basic principles of humanitarian law and of their obligation to observe these rules.

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* MISAB: Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Bangui Accords
* MINURCA: United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic
* FARF: Forces armées pour une republique fédérale (Armed Forces for a Federal Republic)
In addition to focusing on these specific priorities, the Yaoundé regional delegation pursued its longstanding activities in the area of dissemination and promotion of humanitarian law among different target groups (authorities, armed and security forces, academic circles, etc.). The ICRC also continued to promote regional cooperation among the Red Cross organizations in the countries covered by the

**IN 1998 THE ICRC:**

- continued, over 11 months, its visits to Nigerian POWs and civilian internees detained in Cameroon in connection with the Bakassi peninsula border dispute and provided them with assistance in the form of food, medicines and hygiene items; registered, in the same context, 2 Nigerian civilians and 2 Nigerian soldiers captured in May and October respectively;
- arranged for the repatriation, at the end of November, of 86 Cameroonian POWs and 1 civilian internee (together with the mortal remains of 1 person), released by the Nigerian authorities;
- visited 2 detainees previously registered in the Central African Republic and provided hygiene items for another 123;
- registered, in February, 16 people newly detained for security reasons and revisited 6 others in 15 places of detention throughout Chad during its annual round of visits; conducted spot visits in April to 11 places of detention, registering 19 new detainees and revisiting 15 others; made representations to the Chadian Minister of Defence with a view to gaining access to 4 people who were not seen during the April visit;
- helped restore and maintain links between refugees and their families abroad (978 Red Cross messages collected and 1,172 delivered) through the region’s National Societies;
- in the Central African Republic, registered 24 unaccompanied children from Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- provided assistance in the form of school supplies and clothing for 255 Cameroonian children who had lost parents during the Bakassi events; distributed a final handout of food (rice, beans) and other supplies (seeds, tools, fishing gear) to people displaced by the Bakassi dispute who were still in a precarious situation;
- provided, in coordination with the Cameroon Red Cross Society, food, blankets, and kitchen sets for about a thousand people displaced as a result of intercommunal fighting in western Cameroon;
- furnished ad hoc assistance in the form of blankets and tarpaulins to some 130 people in the Central African Republic displaced as the result of an incident on the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
delegation and to provide, within its spheres of competence, logistic, financial and material support for the region’s National Societies, and in particular the “Gabonese Red Cross”, which is currently in the process of being formed and which was officially recognized by a presidential decree in 1998.

- provided emergency medical supplies, including medical kits to deal with major burns and blood bags for transfusions, to treat people seriously injured in the oil tanker explosion in Yaoundé in February;
- provided logistic, financial and material support for 150 Cameroon Red Cross volunteers who evacuated people injured in the tanker explosion in Yaoundé;
- donated a vehicle to the Gabonese Red Cross and another to the Equatorial Guinea Red Cross Society;
- financed first-aid training for 20 São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross volunteers;
- organized seminars on water and habitat for 45 first-aiders from the Equatorial Guinea and the São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross Societies; trained some 40 trainers from the region’s National Societies in techniques used in these 2 domains in emergency situations;
- took part, in July, in the setting-up of a tracing service for the Central African Red Cross Society and trained 32 of its volunteers in activities aimed at restoring and maintaining family links;
- provided the São Tomé and Príncipe Red Cross and the Gabonese Red Cross with logistic support in connection with the legislative and presidential elections held in those countries in 1998;
- gave support to the dissemination departments of the region’s National Societies;
- organized, together with the Federation, the third annual coordination meeting for senior staff of National Societies in the region;
- organized, jointly with the Cameroonian Ministry of Justice, a national seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law in Cameroon, attended by top-level representatives of several ministries;
- in the Central African Republic, held information sessions on humanitarian law and Red Cross principles for 263 members of the armed and security forces and 360 officers and soldiers from MINURCA contingents.
The conclusion of the peace process in Angola was delayed owing to a series of setbacks in the first quarter of 1998, and it was not until March that UNITA* formally announced the complete demobilization of its troops. At the same time the Angolan government officially recognized UNITA as a legal political party. It also promulgated special status for Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the movement. UNITA, for its part, turned its radio station, Vorgan, into a non-partisan station and made preparations for the possible arrival of Jonas Savimbi in Luanda.

The peace process foundered, however, on the issue of extending unified State administration to the whole of the national territory. Despite the fact that the deadline was extended on successive occasions, UNITA failed to hand over a number of localities under its control, including the towns of Bailundo and Andulo, to government administration. Furthermore, UNOMA,* whose mandate was prolonged several times in 1998, announced at the beginning of June that UNITA still had armed elements in its ranks. For these reasons, on 12 June the UN Security Council took the decision to impose a new set of sanctions against UNITA.

Diplomatic approaches made to the parties concerned by the UN Secretary-General's special representative for Angola, Mr Alioune Blondin Beye, and, following his death, by his successor Mr Issa Diallo, proved fruitless. In fact, on 24 August UNITA announced that it was severing relations with the three observer countries (Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States) in the joint commission overseeing implementation of the 1994 Lusaka protocol. The Angolan government responded by suspending UNITA representatives from the

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* UNITA: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
* UNOMA: United Nations Observer Mission in Angola
legislature and from the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation. A
group of these representatives distanced itself from the position adopted by Jonas
Savimbi and set up a splinter UNITA party, which was immediately recognized by
the Angolan government. Most of the UNITA representatives were reinstated in
their posts on 23 September.

On the ground, the insecurity prevailing in the Benguela, Huila, Huambo,
Malange and Uíge areas spread progressively in the latter half of 1998 to several
other Angolan provinces. As well as claiming victims, this upsurge of violence,
whether politically motivated or related to banditry, prompted further large-scale
displacements of civilians within the country and to neighbouring States (mainly
the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Zambia). It also hindered
the work of international humanitarian organizations operating in Angola, several
of which were directly targeted in security incidents. As a result these organiza­tions
limited and in some cases suspended their activities in certain regions of the
country.

Subsequently, worsening security conditions considerably limited the movement
of humanitarian personnel in the field. The situation deteriorated still further in
early December, with the resumption of open hostilities between government
forces and UNITA troops on the Planalto, and particularly in the Bailundo,
Huambo and Kuito areas; all aid workers were evacuated from Kuito, which suf­fered
heavy UNITA shelling in late December. The number of expatriates belonging
to humanitarian organizations was also reduced in other regions of the country.

The ICRC continued, as far as it could, to carry out regular ad hoc missions
overland or, when security conditions so dictated, by air, to the provinces worst
affected by the fighting in order to assess humanitarian needs and take action
where required.

Clashes also persisted in the Cabinda enclave. The ICRC carried out a number
of missions to the area, during which it met regularly with representatives of the
Angolan armed forces and also established direct contact with members of the
Cabinda separatist movements in order to inform them about its mandate.

Following the intervention of Angolan armed forces in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo, the ICRC sent a memorandum to the Luanda authorities
reminding them of their obligations pursuant to the Geneva Conventions and
Additional Protocols.

As part of its traditional activities, the ICRC continued its efforts to promote
international humanitarian law in different sectors of Angolan society, both civil­ian
and military. With a view to contributing to the protection of the civilian popu­lation
in rural areas, the ICRC delegation continued to broadcast humanitarian
messages weekly on national radio.

There was progress in regard to dissemination among the armed forces and
security forces: in May 1998, after several years of negotiations, the ICRC finally
obtained permission from the Angolan army staff headquarters to run humanitarian law courses for instructors in the three services and for regional and provincial command officers. The first course for military instructors was held in Benguela in July. Furthermore, the Angolan army decided to set up a unit responsible for incorporating humanitarian law in the training received by troops.

In 1998 the ICRC continued to fit amputees with artificial limbs at its two prosthetic/orthotic centres in Kuito and Bomba Alta and to manufacture components at the Neves Bendinha and Bomba Alta workshops. Following the withdrawal at

**IN 1998 THE ICRC:**

- visited 491 persons deprived of their freedom;
- in view of the worsening internal situation, made 9 spot visits to 6 places of detention in Uige and Huila provinces, registering 20 people detained for security reasons;
- helped restore and maintain family links between Angolan nationals and between refugees and their families abroad by collecting 6,154 and delivering 5,551 Red Cross messages;
- gave Rwandan refugees in the Luau region the opportunity to write Red Cross messages for the first time to family members back home;
- registered 8 new cases of unaccompanied Rwandan children and followed up 53 previously registered cases;
- located 42 persons sought by their relatives, with the cooperation of the Angola Red Cross;
- distributed basic essentials (soap, blankets, jerrycans, etc.) to a total of 1,400 families newly displaced as a result of tension in the Cuvelairegion (Cunene province);
- in cooperation with the Angola Red Cross and the Federation, provided the hospital in Cuango with medical supplies to treat victims of the fighting in Lunda Norte province in July;
- continued to support, within the framework of a bilateral project, the health programme carried out by the German Red Cross in 3 hospitals and 8 health posts in the Bailundo region;
- fitted 2,139 new amputees, including 805 landmine victims, with artificial limbs; repaired prostheses fitted previously;
- distributed 6,304 prosthetic/orthotic components to other organizations working in this domain in Angola;
- published and distributed a brochure on limb-fitting activities to draw the attention of the Angolan public to the work done in the ICRC's 2 prosthetic/orthotic centres at Bomba Alta and Kuito;
the end of August of the Swedish Red Cross, which had hitherto been financing the Neves Bendinha prosthetic/orthotic centre, the ICRC reached a cooperation agreement, signed on 18 December, with the Angolan Minister of Health concerning the running of the centre. The visit in August by French football international David Ginola to the Bomba Alta and Kuito prosthetic/orthotic centres helped to draw the attention of large segments of national (and international) public opinion to the dangers of anti-personnel mines.

- arranged air transport to the ICRC's centres at Bomba Alta and Kuito for 144 amputees living in outlying provinces and having no direct access to prosthetic/orthotic services;
- supported, within the framework of a bilateral project, the work done by the Netherlands Red Cross to develop the capacity required to maintain and manage the water-supply network in Caála municipality (Huambo province);
- in view of the significant increase in the number of Red Cross messages exchanged as a result of the mounting tension in the country during the year, focused particular attention on providing training for National Society staff in activities aimed at restoring family links;
- organized a first course on humanitarian law for around 30 military instructors from the Angolan armed forces;
- gave presentations on humanitarian law, the Movement and the ICRC for members of the armed forces and national police, reaching over 2,000 commissioned and non-commissioned officers, soldiers and police officers;
- gave similar presentations for over 750 representatives of traditional authorities and of the administration of UNITA-controlled regions, and for 150 volunteers from the Angola Red Cross;
- organized dissemination sessions for about 20 human rights observers deployed in Angola in connection with UNOMA;
- in June, broadcast on national radio 12 programmes weekly in the local Umbundu and Kikongo languages, based on local cultural traditions and drawing a parallel with the humanitarian values advocated by the ICRC;
- alerted, as a priority, several thousand primary and secondary schoolchildren in the Huambo region to the dangers of anti-personnel mines through musical and theatrical performances staged by a troupe of traditional singers and dancers;
- provided the Angola Red Cross with the audiovisual materials required to mount an exhibition on anti-personnel mines, which was shown in Luanda in August.
The political situation in the countries covered by the Harare regional delegation remained relatively stable in 1998.

Relations between Namibia and Botswana became strained, however, at the end of October because of a dispute over three small islands in the Caprivi Strip. Several hundred Namibian nationals subsequently fled to Botswana to escape a Namibian military operation being carried out in the Caprivi Strip against the bases of a secessionist movement. Although a number of the refugees had applied for political asylum in Botswana, some of them were temporarily imprisoned for entering the country illegally and for the unlawful possession of weapons. Once released, they rejoined the other Namibian refugees in a camp under the care of the Botswana Red Cross, UNHCR and the Lutheran church. At the end of November the ICRC, together with the Namibia Red Cross, carried out a survey in the Caprivi Strip and noted that although calm had been restored the population movements continued.

The ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also had direct repercussions on this part of southern Africa, with Namibia and Zimbabwe dispatching troops and military equipment to the country. The ICRC sent a memorandum to the governments of these two States, reminding them of their obligation to comply with the Geneva Conventions.

Furthermore, the Harare regional delegation stepped up its contacts with the Zimbabwe authorities to facilitate ICRC operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the one hand, and to obtain information about and access to any POWs captured by Zimbabwe forces on the other. The government in Harare for its part notified the ICRC that a number of Rwandan servicemen had been captured on Congolese soil and that some of them had been transferred to Zimbabwe; these POWs were visited by the ICRC.

In 1998 the Harare regional delegation set up a dissemination programme for members of the new police academy in Mozambique (senior officers, instructors and cadets). The national police authorities wanted students at the new school to receive not only training in international humanitarian law but also a solid grounding in first aid. This was to be provided by the Mozambique Red Cross, which would also teach all classes of new recruits the basic principles of humanitarian law.
- in Zambia at the beginning of the year, registered 95 people detained in connection with the attempted coup of October 1997 and distributed leisure and hygiene items; visited 68 of them again in September and registered 7 other detainees newly arrested in the same context;
- visited, at the Chegutu air base west of Harare, 43 POWs captured on Congolese soil;
- coordinated and strengthened programmes to restore and maintain family links run by the region’s National Societies, making it possible to exchange 13,000 Red Cross messages between refugees from various African countries and their families;
- held discussions, in conjunction with the Zimbabwe Red Cross, with those in charge of the Waterfalls refugee camp in Harare on ways of stepping up tracing services and facilitating the exchange of Red Cross messages between refugees inside and outside the camp;
- furnished sanitation materials for ICRC operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and relief supplies for operations in Angola;
- thanks to its Special Fund for the Disabled, paid for 2 technicians from Malawi, 2 from Zambia and 2 from Zimbabwe to attend a 1-month training course on polypropylene technology for artificial limb production at the ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centre in Addis Ababa; supplied equipment to the prosthetic/orthotic centres at Ndola and at the United Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia, and to the main hospital in Harare, Zimbabwe;
- organized, in conjunction with the Zambia Red Cross Society, a workshop on tracing and dissemination techniques for 19 representatives of National Society branches in regions receiving Angolan or Congolese refugees;
- provided financial and material support for the activities of the Mozambique Red Cross in connection with municipal elections held in June;
- helped the Malawi Red Cross Society to launch broadcasts on national radio concerning National Society activities and the basic principles of first aid;
- supported the production by the Namibia Red Cross of a weekly radio programme to promote humanitarian law and the National Society’s activities;
- conducted, in cooperation with a member of the South African Institute for the Advancement of Journalism, a training course in Malawi on radio communication techniques for members of the National Societies of Malawi, Zimbabwe and Lesotho;
- conducted one of the very first seminars on the law of war for senior officers of the Botswana armed forces;
- organized a 10-day seminar for instructors of the Zimbabwe armed forces;
- staged a regional seminar on the law of armed conflict for senior officers from SADC* member countries;
- gave various other presentations on humanitarian law and on Red Cross principles and ICRC activities for representatives of the authorities and of the armed and security forces of the other countries covered by the Harare regional delegation;
- donated, through the Namibia Red Cross, works on humanitarian law to the Documentation and Human Rights Centre at the University of Namibia.

* SADC: Southern African Development Community
visits to security detainees in Zambia

The state of emergency declared in Zambia on 28 October 1997 following an attempted coup d'état\textsuperscript{25} was finally lifted in March 1998. In January the Zambian government accepted the offer of ICRC services, made by the regional delegation in December 1997, to visit people detained in connection with the coup attempt. A first round of visits was conducted to places of detention in Lusaka and other towns in the country at the end of January and the beginning of February; a report on these visits was submitted to the authorities at the end of April and was discussed with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior. On 1 June, the trial opened of 82 people accused of taking part in the failed coup of October 1997, including former President Kenneth Kaunda, who was released at the outset. Other defendants, including an opposition leader, were also subsequently discharged. In September the ICRC revisited detainees who had not yet been released.

In Zimbabwe there were sporadic demonstrations during the year against rising prices. Some of them degenerated into riots, in January for example, when the army intervened in the larger towns to restore order. The ICRC closely followed these developments and remained in close contact with the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society in case the latter should be required to take action.

In 1998 the ICRC continued its cooperation with the region's National Societies, focusing particularly on their respective tracing services and dissemination activities. In addition to providing financial and material support, it organized seminars, sometimes jointly with the Federation, to train National Society staff and volunteers in emergency preparedness and management, the restoration of family links and media communication techniques.

As part of its traditional activities, the ICRC also continued to promote knowledge of and respect for international humanitarian law among different target groups (authorities, armed and security forces, academic circles, the media, NGOs) in the six countries covered by the Harare regional delegation. Among its dissemination activities for the armed forces, the delegation developed its relations with the SADC regional peace-keeping centre, with a view to having instruction in the law of war, given by the ICRC, included systematically in all events arranged by this organization.

The regional delegation also obtained the consent of the Botswana military authorities to carry out humanitarian law dissemination activities for the country's armed forces. Talks with the authorities concerned continued so as to encourage them to adopt measures for the national implementation of this body of law, to support the establishment of an international criminal court and to ratify various international treaties, in particular the 1980 United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Ottawa treaty. In the course of the year, Zimbabwe (which also ratified the Convention on Chemical Weapons), Mozambique, Malawi and Namibia ratified the Ottawa treaty.

\textsuperscript{25} See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, p. 88.
The year under review was generally a peaceful one for the countries covered by the Pretoria regional delegation, except for the Comoros and Lesotho, which were once again beset by political disturbances. The ICRC monitored developments in these countries throughout the year and took action as needed, through the National Societies concerned wherever possible, to assist the victims. The regional delegation continued to promote the development of the region’s National Societies and their programmes by providing institutional, logistic, material and financial support. Additionally, as part of its ongoing activities, the ICRC pursued its efforts to improve respect for and spread knowledge of humanitarian law in political, military and academic circles in this part of Africa.

In South Africa, the main events in the political sphere were the publication on 29 October of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which shed light on crimes committed during the apartheid regime, and the preparations for the general elections scheduled for May 1999. The country was once again plagued by all forms of violence.

Criminal activity (mainly gang warfare) continued to be a problem in large cities, escalating in the Cape region in February to the point where the armed forces had to be deployed. KwaZulu/Natal province was once again the scene of political violence in 1998. Clashes occurred in January and again in May and June, and on both occasions the army had to be mobilized to backup local police forces. There were student uprisings at the Universities of Western Cape, Fort Hare and Venda following a decision by the government to reduce university grants. It was in this context, and with a view to helping South African communities and organizations to understand and address the problem of violence, that the ICRC launched a pilot programme designed to raise awareness of basic humanitarian principles, in cooperation with the South African Red Cross Society and using local radio stations in Western Cape province.

In June South Africa ratified the Ottawa treaty. It also adhered to Protocol II on mines, booby-traps and other devices, as amended in 1996, and Protocol IV relating to blinding laser weapons, additional to the 1980 United Nations Convention on prohibitions or restrictions on the use of certain conventional weapons.
clashes on the island of Anjouan

In the Comoros, despite the negotiation under OAU auspices of an agreement early in the year between the federal authorities and the Anjouan secessionists, whereby the last of the government soldiers held by the separatists were released, the population of the island voted by a large majority in a constitutional referendum held on 25 February for total independence from the capital Moroni. Violent clashes erupted sporadically over the year within the Anjouan secessionist movement itself, between those in favour of independence or even a return to French rule and those advocating a greater or lesser degree of autonomy within the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros. The fiercest fighting took place in early December, resulting in several deaths and causing the displacement of thousands of people; a truce was signed, however, on 15 December. In view of these developments, the ICRC sent both dissident parties and the Comorian authorities a memorandum reminding them of the need to comply with international humanitarian law. The ICRC remained in permanent contact with the Comoros Red Crescent and kept a close watch on the situation in both Anjouan and Moroni, where strikes by public-sector workers in May degenerated into riots, claiming a number of victims. It conducted several missions in the archipelago to meet representatives of the government, the secessionist movement and government armed forces and security forces; the latter, like the Anjouan armed forces, favourably received the ICRC’s proposal to carry out humanitarian law dissemination activities among their ranks.

The general elections held in Lesotho on 23 May resulted in a landslide victory for the LCD,* the ruling party. The three main opposition parties immediately claimed that there had been irregularities in the elections and called for the results to be declared null. This move was accompanied by protest demonstrations in the capital Maseru in August, which escalated into direct clashes with the police. The situation in the country continued to deteriorate, prompting the intervention on 22 September of contingents of the South African and Botswana armed forces to restore order. These troops met with resistance from a mutinous section of the Lesotho armed forces, and the fighting during the days that followed claimed victims among the South African contingent, the Lesotho armed forces and the civilian population. In addition, there was extensive looting in Maseru.

Calm was restored at the end of September. The ICRC, in addition to providing logistic and material support for the Lesotho Red Cross Society, sent a memorandum to the parties involved in the violence reminding them of their obligation to respect the Geneva Conventions. In October, the government and the opposition reached agreement on the setting-up of a transitional body with the task of

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* LCD: Lesotho Congress for Democracy
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited an Anjouan secessionist leader detained by the Comorian federal authorities on 2 occasions; visited and registered 4 people arrested as a result of the incidents on the island of Anjouan in early December;
- revisited 38 security detainees at the Maseru central prison in June; in September, registered 151 people at the Ratjomose military camp who had been arrested during the disturbances in Lesotho; visited 36 people newly detained in connection with the same disturbances in October, and 18 others in December;
- gave all the detainees visited on the above occasions the opportunity to exchange Red Cross messages with their families;
- helped, through the exchange of Red Cross messages, to maintain family links between refugees from various African countries who had fled to South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland and their families in other countries;
- organized, in cooperation with WHO and the University of Pretoria's Department of Community Health, a HELP course in Pretoria in November, which was attended by 25 participants from all over Africa;
- funded first-aid courses for several dozen volunteers from the South African Red Cross and assisted the National Society in launching a community first-aid programme at 2 of its Soweto branches;
- assisted the Lesotho Red Cross in its operations to evacuate the wounded during the September events, providing medical supplies, 1,500 first-aid kits and financial aid for the repair of 3 of its vehicles;
- helped the Malagasy Red Cross with its community first-aid programme, and in particular with the analysis of data collected during the first overall assessment of the programme;
- provided the Comoros Red Crescent with material and financial resources for its activities connected with the disturbances that beset the archipelago during the year, particularly in the area of first aid;
- gave the Seychelles Red Cross Society backing for the production of a television series on first aid;
- funded the posts of 2 officers responsible for dissemination and communication programmes run by the South African Red Cross;
- funded the post of an information and dissemination officer at the Seychelles Red Cross;
- supported programmes for the dissemination of humanitarian law run by the region's National Societies;
- promoted the "So Why" campaign in Madagascar;
- organized, in South Africa and Lesotho, presentations on humanitarian law for members of the armed forces and police;
- took an active part in several workshops on peace-keeping operations organized by NGOs and UN agencies;
- supported dissemination programmes run by the South African Ministry of Defence by providing relevant materials;
- in Swaziland in June, during a workshop on the law of armed conflict, held sessions on the subject for commanding officers of the armed forces of SADC member countries;
- took part in a seminar, organized jointly by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, the Pretoria Institute for Strategic Studies and the Oslo-based Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, on the role of civilian police forces in peace-keeping operations (high-ranking police officers from 11 countries in southern, central and East Africa took part.)
reforming the country's electoral system and preparing for new elections; this interim political authority took over at the beginning of December. Also in December, the Kingdom of Lesotho ratified the Ottawa treaty.

Within the framework of a pilot nutrition programme being carried out in Madagascar's prisons, in the first quarter of 1998 the ICRC organized, in cooperation with the National Directorate of the Madagascar prison administration, the last four workshops aimed at making senior prison administration officials aware of the basic principles relating to the nutritional needs of detainees. A plan of action designed to improve nutrition in the country's 13 main prisons was drawn up on this occasion. Talks were also held with the National Directorate and the Catholic chaplaincy serving the prisons regarding a programme to provide material assistance, funded by the ICRC, for fruit and vegetable gardens at these places of detention. In view of the success of the pilot project, the ICRC decided to bring its direct involvement in the nutrition programme to an end, while remaining in close contact with the two bodies mentioned above.

Between March and July, the Malagasy Red Cross Society carried out its first overall assessment of the community first-aid programme set up by the ICRC in 1996 in 12 of the National Society's branches. The assessment was followed in August by a national workshop on community-based first aid, which was attended by National Society and ICRC officials.

26 See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, p. 93.
27 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 84.
East Africa

ERITREA/ETHIOPIA CONFLICT

At the beginning of May, clashes broke out between Ethiopian and Eritrean forces over the disputed border area of Badme. The situation escalated into full-blown conflict in June, with serious outbreaks of fighting along the border areas of Badme and Zelam Anbesa and in the Afar region south of Assab, causing large numbers of civilian casualties. Further casualties were reported following air raids launched by both Ethiopian and Eritrean forces between 5 and 11 June. A moratorium on air strikes announced on 14 June helped to calm things down, but sporadic clashes and occasional shelling continued to claim lives. Ceaseless international mediation efforts failed to find a negotiated solution to the crisis. The armed forces of both countries remained firmly entrenched along the 1,000-km border and military build-up intensified in the area.

Although the worst of the fighting had subsided by mid-June, the effects in humanitarian terms were still being felt right up to the end of the year. Thousands were expelled or returned voluntarily to their countries of origin, creating a massive cross-border movement of people going in both directions, while thousands of other civilians were displaced in the conflict zones.

From the outset, the ICRC worked closely with the National Societies of both countries to ensure that the civilian population was spared the worst effects of the hostilities and that those who were not or were no longer taking part in the fighting were treated in accordance with international humanitarian law.

In May the ICRC sent a delegate to Eritrea and in August it officially opened a delegation in the capital, Asmara. Prior to the conflict the ICRC had been assisting in the development of the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, which is not yet recognized by the State of Eritrea or by the Movement.
As soon as the hostilities erupted in early May, the ICRC made written and oral representations to both Eritrea and Ethiopia drawing attention to the basic provisions of humanitarian law, notably those contained in the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I. Although not party to the Geneva Conventions or their Additional Protocols, Eritrea is nonetheless bound by the customary rules applicable in the event of international armed conflict. The ICRC reminded both parties of their obligations in particular towards prisoners of war, civilian internees and nationals of the adverse side expelled or returning voluntarily to their countries of origin.

In accordance with the mandate conferred on it by the States Party to the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC requested authorization from the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia to conduct visits, in accordance with its standard procedures, to prisoners of war (POWs) and interned civilians, in order to ensure that the treatment they received and the material conditions in which they were held complied with the provisions of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions.

In Eritrea, after a first visit to a group of POWs immediately before their repatriation to Ethiopia at the end of August, the ICRC began visits to civilian internees in various places of detention and pursued its efforts to gain access to all POWs. In Ethiopia, the ICRC carried out regular visits to POWs and to civilian internees held in one internment camp.

Following the interruption of telecommunication and postal services between Eritrea and Ethiopia, a network was set up to collect and distribute Red Cross messages so as to allow separated family members and civilian internees to inform their relatives of their whereabouts and welfare. The necessary procedures were also set up with the belligerents’ respective Red Cross Societies to reunite with their parents unaccompanied minors who had become separated from their families as a result of expulsion or voluntary return.

In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC ensured the safe passage across the front lines of thousands of Ethiopian and Eritrean civilians who were either deported or returning voluntarily to their countries of origin. In close cooperation with the respective Red Cross Societies, the ICRC provided medical assistance for the most vulnerable and material aid (blankets, kitchen sets, etc.) as needed. In addition, the ICRC regularly brought recurring humanitarian issues to the attention of the relevant authorities.

In May and June, delegates worked in close cooperation with the Red Cross Societies of Ethiopia and Eritrea to strengthen the capacity of their branches near the conflict zones, and to build up preparedness in case the situation deteriorated further.

With ICRC support, the Ethiopian Red Cross made additional ambulances available to its branches in the Afar and Tigray Regional States and provided tanker trucks to transport drinking water. Subsequently, together with the
- in August, visited 70 Ethiopian POWs in Eritrea immediately before their repatriation;
- visited civilian internees held in various places of detention in Eritrea and continued its efforts to gain access to Ethiopian POWs in Eritrea;
- carried out regular visits to POWs and civilian internees held in 1 internment camp in Ethiopia;
- exchanged 4,560 Red Cross messages between civilian internees and their families;

- on 52 occasions between August and December, ensured the safe passage across the front lines of thousands of Eritrean and Ethiopian civilians expelled or returning voluntarily to their countries of origin;
- handled 973 Red Cross messages to allow people without contact with their families to inform relatives of their whereabouts and welfare;
- in cooperation with the respective Red Cross Societies, reunited 3 unaccompanied Eritrean and Ethiopian minors with their families;

IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, distributed 128.6 tonnes of emergency assistance, including 62.5 tonnes of food, 15 tonnes of high-protein biscuits, 10,150 blankets, 77 rolls of plastic sheeting, 1,000 tarpaulins, 2,000 cooking pots, 375 kitchen sets, 2,717 jerrycans, 2,300 cups and plates and 13 tonnes of soap, to civilians returning to their countries of origin or displaced by the conflict;
- in cooperation with the two National Societies, distributed medical supplies to treat several hundred war-wounded;
- together with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, gave the thousands of Ethiopian nationals returning from Eritrea and those stranded in the Afar region access to water, by ensuring regular replenishment of inflatable water tanks;
- upgraded the water supply and storage capacity of health posts in the Afar region;
- supported and strengthened the capacity of the respective Red Cross Societies so that they could meet the needs of people affected by the conflict and prepare for any further hostilities;
- gave the Eritrean Red Cross special training in Red Cross message procedures;
- provided financial support for first-aid courses run by the Eritrean Red Cross and trained Ethiopian Red Cross first-aid workers to staff health posts or to enable them in their turn to train basic first-aiders to work at the various health posts and hospitals in the contingency evacuation plan.
National Society, the ICRC conducted surveys in both these regions to prepare for the eventuality of renewed fighting. A joint plan of action was drawn up and the necessary logistic and organizational measures were taken to set up emergency evacuation networks for the war-wounded. By providing stocks of first-aid and surgical supplies, the ICRC and Ethiopian Red Cross bolstered the capacity of health facilities in the Tigray and Afar Regional States to deal with an influx of hundreds of war-wounded. Additional emergency medical stocks were brought in from the ICRC's logistics base in Nairobi28 and hundreds of Red Cross first-aiders were given specific training in the treatment of war-wounded and provided with the necessary materials.

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea mobilized all its resources to respond to the needs engendered by the conflict. It deployed 30 first-aid volunteers, assigned additional ambulances to the Ministry of Health's surgical facilities near the front lines and supplied tents to medical facilities and centres receiving the internally displaced. It also conducted surveys and carried out ad hoc distributions of food and material assistance to vulnerable groups in the affected areas, in particular in Assab. The ICRC supported the National Society's efforts by helping out with vehicle repairs (ambulances, trucks and water tankers) and providing medical and relief items. It also built up stocks of emergency medical supplies for the treatment of war-wounded.

ETHIOPIA

The Ethiopian government, led by the EPRDF,* which had been in power since the end of the civil war in 1991, continued its battle against the underdevelopment and extreme poverty that have beset the country in recent decades. However, the country's food supply, often threatened by adverse weather conditions, received a boost with a record harvest in 1998.

Armed opposition groups were still active in certain areas, primarily the Somali National Regional State, but on a minor scale compared with previous years. The most serious threat to Ethiopia's peace and stability came from an unexpected quarter: the conflict that erupted over a border dispute with Eritrea in May.29

The ICRC maintained a presence in the different regions affected by insecurity and strengthened its contacts with the regional authorities. In northern Ethiopia, it extended its activities in connection with the international conflict and established a permanent presence in Tigray and Afar Regional States.

On 25 June, six ICRC staff members were abducted in the Ogaden region, while travelling between Gode and Jijiga. They were released unconditionally on 10 July. As a result of this incident, all ICRC activities in the region were put on standby. The office at Gode remained open, with one expatriate monitoring the situation and keeping in touch with the relevant authorities. The ICRC made contact with all the parties, including opposition factions, and at the end of the year had received the necessary security guarantees to enable it, in principle, to resume its activities in full the following year.

The main thrust of ICRC work in Ethiopia remained protection of the approximately 10,000 people imprisoned in connection with the change of regime in 1991 or for reasons of State security. Throughout the year the ICRC carried out regular visits, in accordance with its standard procedures, to people held in federal and regional places of detention all over the country. Several oral and written representations were made to the relevant authorities regarding specific aspects of the detainees' treatment and living conditions. However, in spite of repeated representations, the ICRC was still not authorized to resume visits to detainees held at the Central Investigation Department, suspended since September 1997, or to police stations in Addis Ababa, for which no clearance was received from April 1998.

The ICRC's legal delegate and a locally hired lawyer continued to monitor the trials, both in Addis Ababa and in the regional supreme courts, of detainees accused of having committed offences during the previous regime, focusing on the

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29 See pp. 101-104.
* EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
defendants' right to a fair trial. They also assessed the judicial process regarding detainees held in connection with internal security matters.

During their visits, delegates and ICRC engineers paid special attention to the health situation in places of detention, delivering medical supplies to health centres and clinics and carrying out improvements to kitchen facilities and water-supply and sewage systems. Emphasis was placed on preventive health measures and sound hygiene practices in order to reduce the incidence of such ailments as diarrhoea and skin diseases. A pilot project to promote basic health education was successfully implemented in two civilian prisons in cooperation with the Jima School of Environmental Health. The project aimed to involve local partners in raising detainees' awareness of simple preventive measures adapted to the prison environment, such as good personal hygiene, proper waste disposal and the regular airing of mattresses.

The ICRC, together with the Ministry of Mines and Energy, helped produce a new type of stove for the preparation of traditional Ethiopian food. Designed, developed and tested in prisons, the stoves are easily maintained using locally available materials. Use of the stoves had an immediate impact on the consumption of firewood, which was reduced by 50%.

In the Ogaden, a major assistance programme was carried out in January and February for victims of the flooding that had devastated south-eastern Ethiopia at the end of 1997. After the waters receded, Ethiopian Red Cross and ICRC truck convoys reached most of the previously inaccessible areas in the Gode and Afder regions and completed the distribution of non-food items.

In the first half of the year, the ICRC continued its integrated programmes (preventive health care, water supply and sanitation and veterinary services) in the Afder zone of the Somali National Regional State. These activities, aimed at enhancing public and animal health, were conducted for the benefit of the nomadic population. Support was also extended to existing public health facilities, and projects to improve access to drinking water were implemented. The programmes had to be interrupted and staff withdrawn following the security incident in June.

The facilities of the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Addis Ababa continued to be used by the ICRC and the Special Fund for the Disabled as a regional centre for Africa and the Middle East for the training of technicians and the production of prosthetic components.

30 See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, pp. 95-98.
As the Ethiopian Red Cross Society was undergoing, with Federation support, a comprehensive development programme, its cooperation with the ICRC was divided between activities connected with the internal situation and those related to the international conflict. Regular cooperation activities in the areas of tracing, dissemination, first aid and the development of branches in potential conflict zones continued, but at a slower pace owing to the National Society’s reorganization, and greater emphasis was placed on emergency preparedness in connection with the international conflict.

On 30 and 31 March, as part of the ICRC’s ongoing cooperation with the OAU, the delegation in Ethiopia and the OAU Secretariat organized the annual debate on humanitarian issues, the fifth of its kind, in Addis Ababa. The theme of this year’s seminar was "Implementation of international humanitarian law in the context of anarchic or disorderly conflicts". It was attended by almost all the African ambassadors accredited to the OAU, together with representatives of the embassies of the Member States of the UN Security Council, the Council of Europe and numerous UN agencies and NGOs. The ICRC Vice-President, in Addis Ababa for the occasion, took the opportunity to meet the Ethiopian Prime Minister in order to discuss the ICRC’s activities in Ethiopia.

The ICRC continued to support the work of the interministerial committee for the development and implementation of international humanitarian law, and made a sustained effort to encourage the government to ratify the Ottawa landmines treaty and the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons.
- visited approximately 10,000 people held in connection with the change of government in 1991 or for State security reasons in over 100 places of detention;
- in cooperation with the Ethiopian Red Cross, exchanged 2,208 Red Cross messages between people detained under the responsibility of the civilian authorities and their families;
- provided 32 tonnes of material assistance comprising blankets, hygiene products and recreational items directly to some 10,000 detainees and delivered medical supplies to prison clinics;
- handled 4,115 Red Cross messages in order to maintain or restore family links for Ethiopian refugees outside the country and for refugees from neighbouring countries settled in Ethiopia, in conjunction with the Ethiopian Red Cross;
- jointly with the Ethiopian Red Cross, distributed 71.5 tonnes of maize seed for immediate planting in 18 villages in the Gode and Afder zones hard hit by flooding; between November 1997 and March 1998, distributed 10,000 blankets, 4,620 jerrycans, 150 bags of sugar, 10 tonnes of high-energy biscuits, 83 rolls of plastic sheeting, 31 medical kits and veterinary drugs for the treatment of 430,000 animals;
- informed nomads in the Afder zone how to obtain and administer the appropriate medication for common diseases in their animals;
- continued community-based health awareness programmes for pastoral populations in the Afder zone having no access to government health facilities; trained 50 women in preventive health measures;
- provided material and technical assistance to repair hand-pumps, clean and rehabilitate wells and construct rainwater-harvesting dams for the urban and pastoral population and their livestock in the Afder zone;
- worked with the Federation to improve the ability of the Ethiopian Red Cross to provide services to the most vulnerable at the community level, and helped the National Society to build its capacity in the areas of emergency preparedness, first aid, tracing and dissemination;
- conducted regional workshops to train National Society dissemination officers, tracing volunteers and Red Cross youth leaders;

IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- trained 25 technicians from 13 countries in polypropylene technology at the prosthetic/orthotic centre in Addis Ababa;
- supplied 4,015 feet components and 1,575 knee joints and other materials from the Addis Ababa workshop for prosthetic/orthotic projects worldwide and carried out 27 technical follow-up missions to 22 prosthetic/orthotic projects in 12 countries;
gave 2 seminars on humanitarian law for 43 officers from training institutions and other units of the EDF,* the air force and the Ministry of Defence, as part of the overall programme for the incorporation of humanitarian law in defence training and military operations;

- held courses for 14,000 new EDF recruits; as well as presentations on the ICRC's mandate and the basic rules of the law of armed conflict, the courses included performances by Circus Ethiopia;\(^{31}\)

- in the first half of the year, organized 7 half-day dissemination sessions for a total of 2,165 officers of the armed and police forces;

- in February and November, held 2 half-day dissemination sessions for 315 district commanders from 6 regions (Afar, Oromia, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, Tigray and Amhara), focusing on humanitarian law, human rights and correct policing methods;

- in December, conducted 2 3-day training workshops for Ethiopian Red Cross disseminators at Jimma and Bahr Dar;

- organized a 5-day workshop for 11 professors from the law faculty of the Ethiopian Civil Service College in August, as well as a number of half-day seminars, with the aim of supporting the teachers' efforts to include humanitarian law in the faculty's curriculum.

\(^{31}\) Circus Ethiopia is a local organization whose artistic performances inform the general public about various humanitarian matters.

* EDF: Ethiopian Defence Forces
Initiatives to create a central authority in Somalia met with no success in 1998. Although the country remained split up into areas dominated by different clans, there was a significant move towards regionalization in July, with the creation of regional administrations in Puntland state in the north-east and in the Benadir region, which comprises Mogadishu. The Benadir administration was the fruit of months of meetings and negotiations, but strong opposition from key players in Mogadishu severely hampered its efficiency and made the security situation even worse. The seeds of a similar administration were sown in Jubaland towards the end of the year, but here too, persistent insecurity prevented the initiative from getting off the ground. Somaliland, which was still seeking recognition as an independent State, was relatively peaceful in comparison with previous years.

Elsewhere chaos and anarchy reigned, with not even the rudiments of a local administration in place. Clashes between clans, sub-clans and even families resorting to guns to resolve differences continued to make the lives of civilians a misery in many parts of the country. The situation deteriorated in southern Somalia, where fierce fighting took place over the town of Baidoa and for control of the port of Kismayo. These clashes claimed many casualties, not least because large numbers of mines had been laid in the area. In a more positive development, in the Gedo region, two other warring factions, the SNF* and Al Itihad, agreed to settle their differences peacefully in the second half of the year.

The absence of a central government, combined with the devastation caused by the civil war, persistent insecurity and the lack of any kind of infrastructure, had
serious implications for the daily life of the civilian population. The health system remained in a critical state, without qualified medical personnel or public health facilities, apart from those provided by humanitarian agencies and a few private local initiatives whose services had to be paid for. The economy, which relied to a large extent on the livestock trade with the Gulf States, received a crushing blow at the beginning of the year when Saudi Arabia banned the import of Somali livestock. This had especially severe effects on the pastoralists and transporters whose livelihood depended on this trade. Thousands of people also fell prey to the vagaries of the climate, which brought regular flooding or drought. Furthermore, many civilians were forced to flee areas affected by conflict and swell the ranks of displaced people already living in camps, faced with poor hygiene, shortage of food and lack of medical and sanitation facilities. Landmines, both old and new, represented an additional hazard, rendering entire areas inaccessible to the civilian population or cutting them off from the rest of the country.

For humanitarian agencies working in Somalia, security remained the principal concern. For this reason, the ICRC continued to base its Somalia delegation in Nairobi. From there, delegates travelled regularly to Somalia to carry out specific activities or monitor ongoing ones, while maintaining a close working relationship with local field staff and using local contractors to deliver relief consignments.

The ICRC’s fears for the security of its staff proved to be only too well-founded on 15 April, when armed gunmen seized ten Red Cross/Red Crescent aid workers in Mogadishu North immediately after their ICRC-chartered aircraft had landed at the Isley airstrip. Together with the Federation, the ICRC publicly appealed to the abductors to release the hostages immediately and unconditionally. Throughout the crisis, the ICRC relied heavily on its network of Somali contacts (Somali Red Crescent Society, clan elders, Somali politicians and other influential figures) to find an appropriate solution. This policy proved to be the wisest, and the captives were freed safe and well on 24 April, without payment of a ransom by the ICRC.

The hostage-taking incident led to restrictions on the movements of expatriates and the suspension of all activities in Somalia other than "life-saving" programmes such as first aid, assistance to the war-wounded and basic curative services for local communities. Support for the Somali Red Crescent’s tracing services and dissemination programmes was also maintained. In addition, the ICRC completed projects for which it had made a commitment and which did not require an expatriate presence, for instance, the drilling of boreholes. The hostage crisis also prompted most other humanitarian organizations to suspend or limit their operations throughout the country.

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See pp. 129-135.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- together with the Somali Red Crescent, exchanged some 27,300 Red Cross messages between members of dispersed families in Somalia and abroad; opened 443 tracing cases and solved 263;
- broadcast the names of 4,902 Somalis through the BBC Somali Service in Nairobi on behalf of families trying to locate missing relatives;
- distributed 2,577 tonnes of food and some 662 tonnes of seed, together with tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets, fishing tackle and basic necessities, to people affected by fighting, adverse weather conditions or poor harvests;
- repaired 11 dykes along the Juba river and rehabilitated irrigation systems covering 1,700 hectares of arable land in the Hiran region; distributed 100,000 sandbags to farmers to fill gaps in the flood protection system;
- distributed 96 tonnes of food aid to orphanages, hospitals, and detainees and guards at Mogadishu central prison (assistance to the last group was halted in the course of the year);

- fully supported Keysaney hospital in Mogadishu North, run by the Somali Red Crescent in cooperation with the ICRC, by supplying medicines, surgical materials, cleaning products and fuel and paying running costs and the salaries of staff;
- provided regular or ad hoc support to health facilities treating war casualties (Medina and K6 in Mogadishu South and Galkayo and Baidoa hospitals), channelling supplies through the Somali Red Crescent and the ICRC field officer, and to a number of private hospitals according to needs;
- together with the Somali Red Crescent, set up a temporary health post in Belet Huen to treat flood victims, which gave 10,661 consultations between November 1997 and the beginning of January 1998, and supported 2 Somali Red Crescent mobile clinics in Marere and Jamame (south of the Juba valley), which visited 38 locations by boat to dispense health care to vulnerable people trapped on dykes and patches of dry land, giving consultations until the service was discontinued in mid-March;

- opened 4 cholera treatment centres in the Middle and Lower Shebele, which were subsequently handed over to the Federation and the Somali Red Crescent;
- supported oral rehydration centres and cholera treatment centres in Mogadishu and rural areas, training local staff and supervising them in the administration of intravenous fluids;
- supported 12 Somali Red Crescent outpatient clinics, 2 mother and child health clinics and 3 other outpatient clinics;
- following the floods, set up 46 treated drinking water points serving 50,000 people; cleaned and disinfected 51 wells that had survived the flooding and rebuilt 72 others that had been damaged;
- in areas affected by cholera outbreaks, provided basic water and sanitation support to health posts by constructing latrines, providing plastic sheeting, rehabilitating wells, fixing or installing pumps, installing water tanks and chlorinating water;
- sank, equipped or repaired 12 boreholes, 45 wells and 10 traditional underground reservoirs (berkad), work on some of which was carried out by means of a
project delegated to the German Red Cross, and improved water-supply and drainage systems;

- in coordination with the Federation, assisted the Somali Red Crescent in the implementation of its primary health care programmes by training medical personnel, building or rehabilitating dispensaries and furnishing medical supplies;
- supervised 2 Somali health education teams, financially supported by the Federation and based in Bal'ad and Afgoi, which organized training sessions for traditional birth attendants and community health workers from outlying villages;
- continued its programmes for young people and militia members, using plays, comic strips and video cassettes adapted to the Somali culture to encourage them to abide by certain minimum standards of behaviour in the conduct of hostilities;
- took every opportunity to increase awareness of matters relating to protection of the civilian population among the authorities, militias and elders, including promotion of the brochure Spared from the Spear;
- informed a variety of target audiences about its activities in Somalia through publications, press releases and regular contacts with the media;
- organized a dissemination workshop in Djibouti in early December for Somali Red Crescent field officers, focusing essentially on information and communication techniques and using the occasion to distribute the Somali version of the dissemination officer’s handbook.
Until April, the ICRC continued its assistance to the victims of the flooding that devastated southern Somalia at the end of 1997 and in early 1998. Because of the particular security context in Somalia, the ICRC took the lead in the Movement’s flood-relief operation. All operations were, however, carried out in close consultation with both the Federation and the Somali Red Crescent.

In Lower Shebele and Lower Juba, water remained stagnant for weeks – and in some cases for months – leaving fields submerged and villages inaccessible. In the initial stages of the emergency the ICRC targeted the most needy, delivering basic shelter materials and high-protein biscuits to some 228,000 people in Gedo, Juba, Hiran, Middle and Lower Shebele.

Harvests were poor and many underground grain stores (bakar) were destroyed in the flooding, depriving many people of their coping mechanisms and leaving them extremely vulnerable. During a second phase of the assistance operation, 258,500 people were provided with seeds to be planted once the waters receded in an attempt to forestall future food shortages. Subsequently, the ICRC switched to an integrated approach, focusing on longer-term food security, health care and water and sanitation programmes. Logistics posed a major problem, as many roads were damaged and a number of areas cut off. All manner of means were employed to bring aid to the beneficiaries, ranging from aircraft, boats, lorries and pick-up trucks to donkey carts and camels.

The incidence of water-borne diseases increased rapidly as open expanses of polluted water spread. Consequently, water and sanitation programmes were in great demand. Activities were centred on the lower Juba valley, where water-purification and well-cleansing programmes were set up to minimize the risks of diarrhoea. Efforts were also made to control malaria and respiratory infections and to monitor outbreaks of haemorrhagic fever.

Cholera was a source of particular concern, as the annual cycle started earlier and the incidence was higher than usual, with more than twice the amount of cases being recorded than during the epidemic in 1997. Several "cholera isolation sites" and treatment centres were opened in Mogadishu and in Lower Shebele, Middle Shebele, Hiran and Lower Juba as the outbreak spread from the cities to rural areas. ICRC teams supported these and other medical facilities treating the increasing number of patients by providing expertise, training of local counterparts in preventive and curative techniques and furnishing supplies for medical and water and sanitation activities. Joint ICRC/Somali Red Crescent teams also pursued their preventive and health education programmes, particularly in remote

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54 See the ICRC’s 1997 Annual Report, p. 100.
villages, in an effort to raise public awareness of the risks related to the disease and to underline the importance of hygiene and oral rehydration therapy.

The Somali Red Crescent remained the only national structure still in existence in Somalia. Both before and after the hostage crisis, the ICRC worked closely with the National Society in all its areas of activity and prepared the way for it to take over management of certain health, tracing and dissemination programmes. To this end, in October the ICRC completed its transfer of responsibility for the tracing service to the Somali Red Crescent, while remaining on hand to provide technical and financial support as needed. With thousands of Somalis still displaced within their homeland or scattered all over the globe, the tracing programme remained one of the largest and most invaluable services rendered in a country whose centralized postal system collapsed years ago.

The ICRC kept up its efforts to promote respect for humanitarian rules by drawing parallels with Somalia's nomadic tradition and oral culture. A series of short plays (googoos) were devised, combining humour, sketches and music and covering such issues as women and war, roadblocks, lack of freedom of movement, aid and aid dependency. They were reviewed and finalized together with the Somali Red Crescent dissemination department and then recorded in Mogadishu for airing on the BBC Somali Service. On the basis of historical research carried out in previous years, the ICRC also developed a dissemination strategy aimed at illustrating the similarities between local traditions of warfare and the basic humanitarian rules contained in the Geneva Conventions.

In late December, the ICRC began gradually to resume certain of its activities in Somalia, mainly seed programmes for victims of renewed flooding in the south of the country, deploying a limited number of expatriates and proceeding with extreme care. Other areas, including Mogadishu, remained off-limits.

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35 See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, p. 103.
Internal conflict persisted in Sudan in 1998. The government in Khartoum was still facing rebellions from the SPLM/A* and from the NDA,* the latter active in the north-east. During the year there was fighting between the government and opposition forces in different areas of southern Sudan (particularly in the Bahr al-Ghazal province in January and February and in Equatoria Province in September and October), in the east (Blue Nile State), in the north-east along the border with Eritrea and in the Nuba mountains. There were also clashes in Unity State between factions allied to the government and tribal clashes in Western Darfur. Peace talks between the government and the SPLM, which had resumed in October 1997 under the auspices of IGAD* after a three-year interruption,** went into a second round in Nairobi in May and a third round in Addis Ababa in August, but did not make any significant progress towards a settlement. On 20 August, the United States carried out a missile strike on a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum which it claimed was used as a storage facility for chemical weapons. These allegations were denied by the Sudanese government.

When fighting broke out in Wau in Bahr al-Ghazal province in January, tens of thousands of people fled their homes over a 10-day period, crossing front lines into territory controlled by the SPLA. As these people started to return to their homes in the following months, they were joined by a stream of inhabitants of the surrounding countryside who had left their homes in search of food. Towns and villages which would normally have had a population of just a few hundred or thousand found themselves inundated in the space of a few months by a massive

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*SPLM/A: Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement/Army
*NDA: National Democratic Alliance, an umbrella group of opposition forces
*IGAD: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, a sub-regional organization which is composed of the following countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Uganda

*a crisis unfolds*
influx of people attracted by news of food distributions. The newcomers were predominantly women, children and the elderly who had walked long distances and arrived malnourished, sick and traumatized.

By April, reports began to emerge of an impending famine. The combination of years of conflict and insecurity, large-scale population displacements and two years of drought had deprived people of their ability to survive by their own means and they were heading rapidly towards destitution. The worst-affected regions were Bahr al-Ghazal province, Upper Nile and some parts of Equatoria. A ban on all humanitarian flights between February and March meant that it took time for the scale of the emergency to become known and prevented an early humanitarian response. In mid-July, the government and the SPLA agreed on a three-month cease-fire in Bahr al-Ghazal province to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. The cease-fire was extended for a further three months in October to enable these activities to continue.

While much of the world’s attention was focused on southern Sudan, another crisis was developing in the north-east of the country. At the end of March, there were 34,000 displaced people sheltering in makeshift camps around the town of Kassala. By the end of July, renewed fighting had caused a further influx of 25,000 people. Those who had no relatives in the area settled in six camps, many of them in makeshift huts.

The onset of the rainy season at the end of August brought floods which affected hundreds of thousands of people living along the Nile and its tributaries, causing yet more population movements and increasing the incidence of water-related diseases. Malnourished people in particular were highly vulnerable to conditions such as hypothermia, pneumonia and malaria. The rains also restricted access to the displaced and relief operations were seriously hampered.

ICRC field activities had been suspended since November 1996 following a security incident involving an ICRC plane and staff. Nevertheless, a number of programmes were pursued, including the running of the surgical hospital in Lokichokio in northern Kenya and activities carried out in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent. Relations between the Sudanese government and the ICRC were normalized in January, and the government invited the ICRC to resume its activities in Sudan. In May, the SPLM authorized the ICRC to begin field activities immediately in the areas under its control and gave the necessary security guarantees.

These developments meant that as of 1 June the ICRC’s humanitarian aid flights could begin once again and that field programmes could be progressively reintroduced in conflict-stricken areas. The ICRC’s return to southern Sudan came at the peak of the humanitarian crisis. Several surveys were immediately conducted to determine the extent of the needs. These quickly confirmed that in all the places visited (Wau, Bentiu, Juba, Malakal, Malwalkon, Turalei, Waat, Yei,
Yirol, and at a later stage Tonj), people were having to contend in varying degrees with severe food shortages, lack of water, limited access to medical care or, in some cases, all three combined.

On the basis of its surveys and taking into account relief efforts already being conducted by OLS* and other organizations, the ICRC initiated a number of specific programmes designed to fill gaps in existing operations, with the aim of bringing down the mortality rate among the estimated 150,000 displaced people. One of these was the "wet-feeding" programme for malnourished children and adults, most of whom were too weak to make use of dry rations. Serving cooked meals to the most desperate cases ensured that food of adequate nutritional value reached them directly. Conditions in Wau and Tonj were particularly alarming. In addition to running the therapeutic feeding centre in Wau jointly with the Sudanese Red Crescent, the ICRC opened three kitchens in Wau and one feeding centre and three kitchens in Tonj.

In addition, the ICRC provided primary health care and material assistance (shelter materials, blankets, water containers, cooking pots and other items) to displaced people who were sick or exposed to the cold and the rain. Material assistance, fishing equipment and high-energy biscuits were also delivered to places where other humanitarian organizations were running feeding programmes, for instance, Agiep, in order to provide for needs that were not already being met.

The situation had begun to stabilize or improve by the end of the year. There were fewer displacements and the general nutritional status of the population appeared to be on the mend. The physical condition of the thousands of displaced people improved sufficiently for the ICRC to close down its feeding centres in October, leaving just the Sudanese Red Crescent centre in Wau open until the end of November. The worst was over in Bahr al-Ghazal province, although the situation in the Upper Nile, Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei remained unstable, owing mainly to the fragile security environment and adverse weather conditions, and access to these regions was still difficult for humanitarian organizations.

Not all parts of southern Sudan were so severely affected, although needs were still acute. In those areas, the ICRC adopted an "integrated approach", that is, it introduced rehabilitation programmes encompassing relief, health and water and sanitation aspects and including a training component.

Lack of medical supplies and qualified staff had led to a critical situation on the health front, and the fighting and insecurity had made it difficult for people to reach those health facilities that were still functioning. Initially, the most important task was to stock clinics with basic supplies in order to improve basic health care.

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* OLS: Operation Lifeline Sudan, a massive relief operation carried out by a consortium of UN agencies and 42 NGOs.
shifting the focus subsequently to health education, vaccinations, mother and child care, training and monitoring activities.

Exposure to the elements and lack of clean water and sanitation systems had left displaced people particularly vulnerable and further destabilized community health. Access to safe drinking water was a particular problem, as fighting and neglect had either partially or completely destroyed water-supply and sanitation systems. For example, in Waat the ICRC found very few water points and diarrhoea, guinea worm and other water-borne diseases were common. In Yirol, of the 43 water points assessed, only one provided acceptably clean water, while 23 were beyond redemption. In Wau, less than half the boreholes were functioning, and in Juba more than 50% of the town’s water came directly from the Nile, untreated. To address these problems, the ICRC launched a number of programmes aimed at giving easier access to safe drinking water and improving waste disposal. Activities under the programme included drilling boreholes, extending pipelines, increasing water-storage capacities, repairing sewage systems and constructing latrines.

At the same time, a range of relief programmes was set up to help the population regain its self-sufficiency, including distributions of material assistance (depending on the needs, blankets, tarpaulins, lengths of local cloth known as kanga, cooking pots, soap, jerrycans, mosquito nets and shelter materials). Seed, agricultural implements and fishing equipment were also distributed at appropriate times of the year.

The ICRC continued to treat war casualties from southern Sudan at its 560-bed Lopiding surgical hospital in Lokichokio, northern Kenya. While the organization was absent from southern Sudan, OLS planes transported patients categorized as surgical emergencies to the hospital for treatment. In the second half of the year, the ICRC was able to carry out medical evacuations with its own aircraft and to repatriate the patients following their treatment.

In Juba, access to proper medical care continued to be hampered by lack of support from national health authorities and the direct consequences of the war. Since 1994, the ICRC has been working on the rehabilitation of the 500-bed Juba teaching hospital in order to provide more comprehensive surgical care to the general public and to extend such services to the war-wounded. At the end of August, a 119

first releases by SPLA under ICRC auspices

care for the war-wounded

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IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 96 detainees held by the SPLA in 4 detention camps, distributed 7.3 tonnes of food, material and medical assistance and collected and distributed Red Cross messages;
- in August, with the agreement of the government and the SPLA, organized the transfer to Khartoum of 77 former detainees released by the SPLA in Yei;
- continued to visit 2 Ugandan prisoners of war held by the government in Khartoum until their release in May and provided them with material assistance;
- through the Sudanese Red Crescent’s network of volunteers, exchanged over 100,000 Red Cross messages between displaced people, refugees and their families abroad, and between detainees and their relatives;
- registered 221 unaccompanied children stranded in Wau since the onset of the famine early in the year with a view to restoring family contacts;
- distributed 576 tonnes of food and 545 tonnes of other relief supplies to civilians affected by the conflict in southern Sudan;
- in cooperation with the Sudanese Red Crescent (Kassala branch), provided 186 tonnes of material assistance to the flood victims and displaced in the north of the country;
- in Wau and Tonj, opened 1 feeding centre and 6 kitchens serving meals to malnourished children and adults; assisted the Sudanese Red Crescent therapeutic feeding centre for severely malnourished children in Wau;
- supplied therapeutic feeding centres run by NGOs in other towns with 45 tonnes of high-energy biscuits so that they could provide malnourished children with 5 meals a day;
- in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, started the distribution of vegetable seeds and tools to some 2,000 relocated displaced families on the east bank of the Jur river;
- constructed 1,000 tukuls (local huts) to house around 5,000 relocated displaced people in Wau (East Bank camp);
- continued to run its surgical hospital in Lokichokio, which admitted an average of 158 patients from southern Sudan per month (a total of 1,901 in 1998), many of whom were evacuated by ICRC plane and repatriated following treatment;
- continued to supply essential drugs to Juba teaching hospital serving a population of 150,000, rehabilitated sections of the hospital, provided medical staff with food for work, and furnished the services of an expatriate surgical team; since August 1,071 patients were admitted, including 250 war-wounded;
- provided medical supplies to health facilities (clinics or hospitals in Wau, Raja, Damazin, Kassala, Bentiu and Gedaref) on an ad hoc basis to enable them to treat surgical cases, and provided medicines and medical supplies to military and civilian hospitals and health dispensaries in camps for displaced people in Kassala (north-eastern Sudan);
- in Wau, set up 3 primary health centres and a mobile clinic, which gave 75-100 consultations a day to the displaced during the emergency phase and was closed in October;
- in Yirol, rehabilitated the former hospital so that it could be used as a primary health care centre, treating such ailments as malaria, respiratory tract infections and water-borne diseases (100 consultations a day were given) and training nurses and midwives in primary health care and mother and child health;
- supplied 5 primary health care centres in Juba with medicines, medical equipment and tools and trained medical staff (80 to 100 consultations given per day);
- in December, in cooperation with
the Ministry of Health and the Sudanese Red Crescent, set up a measles vaccination programme for 4,260 children, together with vitamin A distribution;

- at the Lokichokio hospital’s prosthetic/orthotic workshop, fitted 294 patients with prostheses and 160 with orthoses and manufactured 585 pairs of crutches;
- carried out a survey of workshops producing artificial limbs or rehabilitating amputees in Khartoum and other government-controlled towns with a view to possible ICRC cooperation;

- initiated several programmes to repair and improve sewage systems and provide access to clean water for hospital patients, displaced people and residents in Bentiu, Juba, Marial, Thiet, Tonj, Wau and Yirol, covering a total of 500,000 people;
- in Bentiu, in cooperation with the German Red Cross, installed an emergency response unit with a maximum production capacity of 250,000 litres of water per day to serve the approximately 19,000 displaced people there;
- provided 2 water trucks to help in the daily distribution of clean water to 240,000 people in 2 camps for the displaced in Omdurman (Khartoum); drilled a deep water well in one of the camps to improve the water supply and avoid the need to bring in water by tanker;
- provided drinking water to people displaced or otherwise affected by the conflict in Sudan and ensured that the inhabitants of Lokichokio had an adequate supply of water during the dry season by maintaining the existing water system;

- continued to provide financial and logistic support to 5 Sudanese Red Crescent branches in the south (Raja, Wau, Bentiu, Malakal and Juba) and to 2 branches along the eastern border with Eritrea and Ethiopia (Kassala and Ed Damazin);
- distributed emergency assistance in cooperation with Sudanese Red Crescent branches in the conflict zones in the south and north-east;

- conducted 26 ad hoc information sessions on humanitarian law for field units, garrisons and training centres, reaching some 1,400 officers of the armed and security forces and 740 police cadets;
- in November, held a 3-day course on the law of armed conflict for 28 high-ranking officers in charge of training at the Command and Staff College in Khartoum, followed up with dissemination sessions for 365 officers and non-commissioned officers in December;
- conducted regular dissemination sessions for patients at the ICRC hospital in Lokichokio, focusing on the Movement and the law of armed conflict;

- in September, organized a round-table conference on the landmines campaign at Sudanese Red Crescent headquarters with the participation of ICRC mine-awareness experts; the meeting was attended by military and government officials, NGOs working in the field of education and members of the Sudanese campaign to ban landmines.
time the ICRC resumed its activities in southern Sudan, but some 400 remained in detention, a number of them awaiting release and/or transfer. For the first time since the conflict began in 1983, on 20 August the ICRC organized the transfer to Khartoum of 77 prisoners released by the SPLA, along with five family members of one of them. All those concerned had previously expressed the wish to return to their places of origin, in private interviews with ICRC delegates.

The ICRC reiterated its offer of services, submitted on 24 December 1997, to visit detainees held by the government.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to promote the systematic inclusion of humanitarian law in training programmes for the armed forces. It organized a seven-hour round-table discussion on the subject with high-ranking officers in July, and in October two senior officers of the Sudanese armed forces attended a conference on humanitarian law for heads of military training at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. In November, for the first time, a course on the law of armed conflict was held for high-ranking officers in charge of training at the Command and Staff College in Khartoum. Three of the participants went on to formulate plans for incorporating the law of armed conflict in the training programme for junior officers.

An estimated 4 million people were still displaced in Sudan in 1998 and over 300,000 Sudanese were living as refugees in neighbouring countries. At the same time, some 200,000 refugees from Eritrea, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad had sought shelter in Sudan. Many displaced people and refugees had no means of communicating with their families other than by Red Cross message. With a monthly average of 8,000 to 10,000 messages exchanged, the Red Cross message network in Sudan remained one of the largest in the world. Thanks to the Sudanese Red Crescent and ICRC field officers, the network remained operational even during the time the ICRC was absent from the field.
UGANDA

As the African Great Lakes region headed towards an international crisis in 1998, Uganda's role as a regional leader came under threat. Relations between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo began to deteriorate in May, when joint military operations against Ugandan rebels in Kivu were suspended. When conflict broke out in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August, relations between the two countries reached an all-time low.

Meanwhile, armed opposition groups remained active in several parts of Uganda, in some cases stepping up their military operations. Sporadic clashes between UPDF* and the LRA* in Acholiland in northern Uganda continued throughout the year. The armed opposition group operating in the south-west (Bundibugyo, Kabarole and Kasese districts) became increasingly daring as the year progressed, mounting attacks and ambushes that resulted in many civilian casualties. In the West Nile region, sporadic mine incidents, ambushes and abductions in the second half of the year signalled a temporary revival of rebel activity on the part of the UNRF II* and the WNBF.* In addition, Kampala itself was the scene of a series of grenade attacks and bomb blasts in public places. Security forces responded by arresting a large number of people suspected of involvement in the incidents.

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* See p. 64.
* UPDF: Uganda People's Defence Forces
* LRA: Lord's Resistance Army
* UNRF II: Ugandan National Rescue Front II
* WNBF: West Nile Bank Front
Civilians, both resident and displaced, were affected by the ongoing conflicts in Acholiland, in the south-west and to a lesser extent in West Nile. The majority of displaced people were unable to return to their homes because of the continuing insecurity, while residents were hard hit by the resulting disruption of local trade and agriculture.

In the northern districts of Gulu and Kitgum, many people continued to live in protected camps, set up as part of the government’s policy to regroup the rural population around trading centres protected by the army. By the end of the year, an estimated 400,000 out of a total of 500,000 displaced people countrywide were thus housed in camps of up to 40,000 people. As a result of this policy, farmers often had limited access to their fields and were therefore not always in a position to cover their food needs. Moreover, the places in which the displaced people had gathered had poor hygiene and health facilities and were unable to meet the needs of such large numbers of people.

Following rebel incursions in 1997, approximately 16,000 people fled their homes in the northern part of the Ruwenzori mountains, most becoming "night-stayers" (sleeping in safe villages or towns and returning to their homes and fields during the day) or moving in with relatives or friends. In the southern part of the Ruwenzori mountains, 22,000 displaced people had come down from the highlands in 1997 and found refuge with family members living in the lowlands or in public buildings. Their presence placed an additional burden on the host families and put a strain on the already fragile local economy.

In the West Nile region, the general improvement in the security situation meant that almost all the people displaced in previous years were able to return to their villages. Only a couple of hundred of displaced remained, settling in the vicinity of the Rhino refugee camp. Towards the end of the year, an increase in rebel activity caused small-scale population displacements in Aringa county.

In addition to the displaced population, Uganda continued to host 170,000 Sudanese refugees in the north of the country and 16,000 Rwandan, Congolese, Somali, Ethiopian and Kenyan refugees in the west and south-west.

In 1998, the ICRC carried on its assistance programmes for civilians in all three regions affected by conflict: Acholiland, the south-west and West Nile. It was able to implement most of its planned activities, although security constraints restricted movement or impeded access to certain areas at certain times. Between May and mid-August the ICRC suspended its activities in Acholiland and withdrew its expatriate staff from Kitgum owing to the deteriorating security situation. A similar problem arose in the south-west at the beginning of November.

The ICRC delegation in Kampala continued to provide logistic support for ICRC operations in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including transport, import/export, storage/warehousing and customs clearance of goods in transit.
In Acholiland, the ICRC concentrated on ensuring a measure of economic security and reducing the risk of long-term dependence on aid among the large numbers of displaced people by distributing material assistance and seed and tools for agricultural rehabilitation, while WFP provided for most of their immediate food needs. For the first planting season the ICRC distributed a variety of food crop seeds, while for the second planting season it handed out cash crop seeds to boost income generation. At the end of the year, the ICRC also supplied blankets, jerrycans and soap to the displaced population.

In the south-west, and particularly south of the Ruwenzori mountain range, the ICRC was the only organization involved in providing supplementary food aid to 22,000 people, with the aim of ensuring that they maintained an acceptable nutritional status. In addition, it distributed vegetable seed and hoes to the same beneficiaries to improve the general economic situation.

Owing to the ongoing conflict in the northern and south-western part of the country, the primary health care system was not able to meet existing needs fully. The persistent insecurity combined with a dearth of local economic resources delayed the implementation of Ministry of Health primary health care programmes, and health facilities lacked essential medical supplies and qualified personnel. To relieve temporary shortages in areas where it was working, the ICRC supplied medicines to health facilities run by the Ministry of Health.

The ICRC also supplied surgical kits and medicines to government and private hospitals in the Kitgum and Gulu districts and in Kasese when these facilities lacked sufficient stocks to treat influxes of war-wounded. It provided similar support for the military medical facility in Gulu caring for wounded and convalescing soldiers.

A cholera epidemic which broke out in December 1997 and ended in mid-June 1998 affected the south-west in particular, with some 15,000 cases reported and several hundred deaths. The ICRC delivered assistance to various hospitals and health centres until the authorities were able to respond with the help of MSF. Particular attention was paid to places of detention in the capital and in the south-west, where the ICRC assisted the prison authorities in controlling the epidemic. In addition, in the south-west, since the incidence of malaria was rising among the local population in general and in particular among the displaced people who had come down from the highlands, the ICRC supported a Ugandan Red Cross malaria awareness programme begun in mid-year.

In order to meet the needs of people who had lost limbs, both as a result of war injuries or mine incidents, the ICRC signed a one-year agreement with the Ministry of Health to support the Fort Portal prosthetic/orthotic centre in western Uganda, provided that treatment and rehabilitation of amputees at the centre was free. The ICRC also undertook to train local technicians in polypropylene techniques.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- regularly visited 1,814 people detained for security reasons or in connection with the activities of armed opposition movements and held in 57 places of detention (prisons, police stations, military barracks), a hospital and a remand home;
- regularly visited 69 Sudanese POWs held in Kampala and supplied them with clothing, hygiene products and recreational items;
- exchanged some 7,000 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families and between Sudanese POWs and their relatives in Sudan;
- facilitated family visits for minors and for re-arrested members of the WNBF;
- to improve living conditions in the places of detention visited, distributed 13 tonnes of soap and other material assistance, such as hygiene and recreational items, nutritional supplements to counteract vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and medical assistance in the event of health problems, for instance during outbreaks of cholera and scabies;
- carried out ad hoc surveys of water-supply and sanitation systems in civilian prisons and followed up with recommendations to the authorities concerning rehabilitation work required;
- made representations to the parties concerned when acts of violence committed against civilians were brought to its attention;
- helped the Uganda Red Cross run its Red Cross message network for detainees, members of families separated by conflict and refugees in the country (some 20,000 Red Cross messages exchanged);
- registered unaccompanied minors among displaced people and refugees and, with the assistance of the Uganda Red Cross, reunited 6 of them with their families;
- in the course of two major distributions, provided 671.7 tonnes of seed (sorghum, maize and bean seed, vegetable kits on the first occasion and groundnut seed on the second) and 55,673 hoes to some 300,000 displaced people in Gulu and Kitgum to help them back on the road to self-sufficiency;
- distributed 390 tonnes of material assistance (cooking pots, blankets, soap and jerrycans) to 300,000 beneficiaries in Gulu, Kitgum and Lira districts;
- distributed 9 tonnes of material assistance (tarpaulins, blankets, soap and jerrycans) to 6,290 people in need in the Ruwenzori mountain districts;
- provided 1,435 tonnes of supplementary food, 31 tonnes of material assistance, 4,542 vegetable kits and 4,469 hoes to 22,000 displaced people in Kasese;
- supplied 42 tonnes of food, 3.7 tonnes of material assistance and 4.7 tonnes of seed for 381 displaced families resettled around Rhino refugee camp in West Nile;
- regularly supplied dressings and surgical materials to 10 private and government hospitals treating war casualties (1,100 wounded admitted, of whom more than 50 were landmine victims);
- regularly visited and supported more than 20 health facilities catering to the needs of 300,000 displaced people in Acholiland and 21,000 displaced people in the south-west, supplying drugs and dressing materials to relieve temporary shortages;
- rehabilitated the Fort Portal prosthetic/orthotic centre in western Uganda, admitted 34 disabled persons (of whom 21 were amputees) and manufac-
tured 21 prostheses and 14 orthoses for them;
- completed a spring and borehole rehabilitation project (10 springs and 12 hand-pumps serving 18,000 people) in Koboko (West Nile), which was handed over to a local committee in March;
- implemented a programme to protect 8 springs and rehabilitate and construct 1,300 latrines in camps for displaced people in Gulu (benefiting a total of 40,000 people);
- rehabilitated the water-supply and waste-disposal system at the disused Kilembe mine, the makeshift home of around 10,000 displaced people;
- supported the Uganda Red Cross, in particular in the areas of tracing, promotion of humanitarian law, emergency preparedness and response, and whenever possible involved National Society branches and volunteers in carrying out its assistance programmes in conflict zones;
- organized dissemination sessions for Uganda Red Cross staff, volunteers and youth leaders and trained branch secretaries, dissemination officers and volunteers at 2 workshops in July and November;
- supported the National Society's cholera and malaria prevention and control programmes;
- for the first time in Uganda, organized a 1-week instructors' course on the law of armed conflict for 36 UPDF officers in September;
- conducted 8 introductory seminars on the law of armed conflict for some 150 junior and non-commissioned officers of the UPDF;
- held 42 dissemination sessions for members of the UPDF, local defence units and the Home Guards operating in conflict zones, incorporating topics such as the security of Red Cross staff and an introduction to the basic rules of behaviour for combatants;
- together with the Ugandan Red Cross conducted 80 dissemination sessions on the Red Cross and humanitarian principles for the beneficiaries of ICRC assistance, local authorities, students and the general public;
- broadcast radio spots in English and local languages in order to raise awareness of Red Cross principles and activities among members of the armed opposition, as well as a wider audience.
In Gulu district, in coordination with other organizations, the ICRC implemented a water and sanitation project consisting of protecting springs, together with a health education programme, in three of the camps for the displaced where needs were most acute. A similar project, which was completed in Koboko in West Nile in March, substantially improved the supply of clean water to both displaced people and residents. The ICRC also implemented a programme to improve water quality and basic hygiene in Kilembe, one of the camps for displaced people in the south-west.

The ICRC continued to visit detainees falling within its mandate in prisons and police stations throughout the country. In August, it resumed visits to detainees held in military barracks. The ICRC also carried on its visits to Sudanese POWs captured in March 1997, who were protected by the Third Geneva Convention. On 20 May, 42 of these prisoners were released and repatriated to Sudan, without ICRC involvement. Following its visits, the ICRC submitted confidential reports to the authorities.

The ICRC completed its evaluation of water-supply and sanitation systems in ten civilian prisons, carried out in conjunction with the penitentiary administration. On the basis of the resulting reports, the authorities were able to submit requests to donors for support for a number of specific projects aimed at improving sanitary conditions. The ICRC was not involved in the implementation of these projects, but it did take action on a number of occasions when detainees were at risk from life-threatening epidemics, supplying essential drugs and medical materials.

Another key concern for the ICRC was protection of the civilian population. Whenever acts of violence committed against civilians were brought to its attention, it made ad hoc representations to the parties concerned.

At the beginning of the year, the UPDF expressed greater interest in instituting training in the law of armed conflict within its ranks. As a result, the ICRC began training sessions for senior officers, and the UPDF set up its own special unit of dissemination officers. The delegation developed its contacts with the faculties of law and political science at Kampala’s Makerere University with a view to introducing courses in humanitarian law for undergraduates, and in preparation donated a range of publications on the subject to the university library. In addition, the ICRC organized meetings and conferences on landmines, with the participation of members of the Ugandan Parliament, to draw attention to the issue and highlight the urgent need for ratification of the Ottawa treaty.

In September, the ICRC and the Uganda Red Cross signed a Cooperation Framework Agreement covering the period 1998 to 2000 and focusing on the areas of dissemination/information, tracing and emergency preparedness and response.

38 See the ICR’s 1997 Annual Report, pp. 111-112.
NAIROBI
Regional delegation
(Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania)

The ICRC maintained a significant presence in Nairobi in 1998: a regional delegation covering Djibouti, Kenya and Tanzania; a logistics base providing support for ICRC relief operations in neighbouring countries and on occasion further afield; an office for southern Sudan; and the Somalia delegation. In addition, a team of specialists in such spheres as dissemination for the armed forces, training, information, cooperation with National Societies, reporting, telecommunications, air operations, water and sanitation, nutrition, agronomy and veterinary work continued to supply technical advice and assistance to other ICRC delegations in the region.

The resumption of ICRC operations in Sudan, the outbreak of armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the consequences of the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea all required a flexible approach and swift action from these support structures so as to enable the operational delegations to respond to the needs in their respective countries.

The Nairobi delegation’s tracing service managed several databases centralizing information on detainees and unaccompanied children within a vast region, including Rwanda, Uganda and Sudan, and assisted the ICRC’s delegations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Burundi, Tanzania and Somalia in all matters relating to tracing. The database containing details of Rwandan detainees and all related files were transferred to ICRC Kigali in May. In September, in response to the Eritrea/Ethiopia conflict, a new database was installed in Nairobi to centralize information on civilians, unaccompanied children, prisoners of war, civilian internees and detainees.

The presence in Nairobi of representatives of numerous parties involved in regional conflicts enabled the ICRC to maintain a regular dialogue with them. The organization also pursued its regular contacts with foreign embassies and their international cooperation departments and with representatives of NGOs and UN agencies in order to ensure operational coordination and exchange of information and enlist support from donor governments financing ICRC operations in the region.

Growing poverty and social tensions were at the root of urban violence, student rioting on the streets of Nairobi and workers’ demonstrations, during which several people were injured in the capital and other towns. As in previous years, ethnic clashes over land rights and water sources in the rural areas of Pokot, Marakwet, Baringo and Nakuru and near the borders with Uganda, Sudan, and...
Somalia and Ethiopia prompted small-scale but frequent local population dis­placements. The government launched an inquiry into the tribal violence, but the report of its findings had still not been published by the end of the year.

Kenya was not spared the devastation wrought by the El Niño weather phe­nomenon. Unusually heavy rainfall in late 1997 and early 1998 left an estimated 2,000 people dead, caused major damage to roads and railways, including the main road between Mombasa and Nairobi which serves the whole region, cut off rural communities, disrupted trade and agriculture and created ideal conditions for the spread of epidemics (Rift Valley fever, cholera). The poor state of the roads and weight restrictions on vehicles hampered the Movement’s efforts to assist conflict and disaster victims in the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions.

In areas where ethnic clashes occurred, the ICRC and Kenya Red Cross Society jointly carried out surveys to determine what long- and medium-term pro­grammes were needed to speed up resettlement of displaced people. Priorities included the distribution of food and non-food aid, agricultural assistance in the form of seed and tools, and construction materials to the most vulnerable among the displaced families. The ICRC also initiated projects to improve water supplies, such as borehole construction and dam rehabilitation, with the aim of reducing tensions between farming and pastoral communities.

During demonstrations in the towns, the ICRC delegation lent material and financial support to Kenya Red Cross teams providing first aid to victims of the violence.

The ICRC approached the Kenyan authorities on a number of occasions to dis­cuss such issues as tribal violence in Rift Valley province and Kenya’s adherence to Protocols I and II additional to the Geneva Conventions.

On 7 August, a truck-bomb exploded outside the United States embassy in the centre of Nairobi. The blast destroyed 47 buildings, killed 253 people and injured over 5,000. The Kenya Red Cross was first on the scene. With technical and logistic support from the ICRC and Federation, a team of over 600 volunteers and staff worked round the clock for five days. They mobilized over 700 blood donors, took part in the search and rescue operation, cleared rubble, provided food for more than 3,000 helpers three times a day, transported the dead to the mortuary and set up a first-aid post that treated 500 casualties. On the second day, a tracing stand was installed in Uhuru Park, manned by a tracing officer and six volunteers from the Kenya Red Cross.

Following the border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, several hundred Eritreans who had been living in Ethiopia for years left or were expelled from the country and made their way to Kenya. About 180 of them became stranded in difficult conditions in the Kenyan border town of Moyale. The ICRC and the Kenya Red Cross provided them with assistance and gave them the opportunity to send Red Cross messages.
As part of a drive to promote respect for human life and dignity during internal disturbances, the regional delegation commissioned a play by celebrated Kenyan playwright Kithaka wa Mberia, entitled *Flowers in the Morning*. The première of the play in Nairobi in October was attended by over 200 special guests from the diplomatic corps, government departments, the armed and security forces, UN agencies, religious organizations and academic circles and was extensively covered by the international and national media. The play went on tour throughout the country, including areas where clashes had occurred, and was seen by a broad cross-section of the population, ranging from policy-makers, representatives of local administrations and community leaders to victims of ethnic violence. By the end of the year, the 14-member cast had staged 34 performances for some 15,300 people in public places and universities.

The ICRC organized two events with Egerton University in Nakuru to promote the teaching of humanitarian law. In June, it hosted a consultative and programming seminar on the teaching of humanitarian law in Kenyan universities. The seminar was followed in December by a "train the trainers" workshop, whose main aim was to provide in-depth knowledge of the law and propose methods and procedures for lecturers preparing a course on "Society and international humanitarian law". This compulsory core course was developed by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Egerton University together with the ICRC; it comprised a 45-hour syllabus designed initially for over 1,300 undergraduate students starting in January 1999. Following these two events, Moi, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam Universities expressed interest in offering humanitarian law as a separate subject in their respective law faculties in the near future.

During the year, the ICRC commissioned two studies relating to humanitarian law in Kenya. One of these, on national measures for implementation of humanitarian law, was submitted to the Attorney-General for consideration. The other, a review of Kenya's constitutional and legislative regime in the light of humanitarian law, was prepared by a senior lecturer of public international law at Nairobi University.

A one-day dissemination session and a "field day" were held at the police and General Service Unit training schools respectively, reaching a total of 2,019 recruits. Later in the year, four other sessions were conducted for a total of 138 officers of various ranks in the two services. Dissemination sessions were also held for three battalions taking part in "Natural Fire 98" a joint East African military peace-keeping exercise held in Lodwar, Kenya, in June.

The year began badly in Tanzania with continuous rains which caused considerable damage to the already limited infrastructure and contributed to the spread of cholera.

Political tensions persisted in Zanzibar. In June, the opposition was banned from Parliament because of its boycott imposed since the last election in 1995.
More members of the opposition were arrested, and at the end of the year 18 people remained in prison facing treason charges. With regard to this issue, the ICRC established and maintained contacts with the island's highest authorities, the judiciary and several lawyers.

On 7 August a bomb exploded outside the United States embassy in Dar es Salaam, killing 11 people and injuring 84. There were fewer casualties than in the simultaneous explosion in Nairobi, as the embassy was situated in a residential area. The Tanzania Red Cross Society was immediately on the scene, dispensing first aid and evacuating the wounded to the nearest hospital.

Suspects continued to be arrested in various African countries in connection with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, before being transferred to the detention facility of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania. In September the first sentences were handed down: the former Rwandan prime minister and the mayor of Taba were both condemned to life imprisonment. The ICRC, which is regularly notified of the arrival or transfer of detainees, made four visits to the United Nations detention unit during the year. Each visit was followed up by a written report addressed to the Tribunal authorities.

The ICRC made no progress in its efforts to establish a headquarters agreement with the Tanzanian government, despite two years of discussions on the subject.

Refugees fleeing conflicts in neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to cross the border into Tanzania. In 1998, the country was host to some 75,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (45,000 of whom were voluntarily repatriated before renewed conflict halted the process in August); 250,000 Burundians in seven camps (2,000 returned voluntarily during the year, but as many arrived in their stead); and 2,000 new Rwandan refugees in addition to the few thousand that had stayed on illegally following the mass repatriation in 1996. The ICRC maintained its office in Kigoma to keep up its tracing services for these refugees, in cooperation with the Tanzania Red Cross tracing offices in Kasulu, Kibondo and Ngara.

Following the resumption of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, groups of Congolese soldiers and combatants arrived in the Kigoma region of Tanzania, where they were disarmed and placed under the supervision of the local authorities. The Tanzanian Ministry of the Interior requested legal and material assistance for the people concerned, numbering about 250, from the ICRC. While waiting for a government decision on their status, the ICRC provided the Ministry with a limited amount of food and material aid in order to cover their needs for one month. In August and September, the number of war-wounded arriving from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo increased sharply. The ICRC delivered assistance to the Kigoma hospital, where many of them were being treated.
Following the victory of the FRUD*/RPP* coalition in the legislative elections in December 1997, President Aptidon named his new government in January. The Djibouti armed forces carried out an intensive campaign against a dissident faction of the FRUD in the northern area of Adailou at the beginning of the year, which resulted in the capture of several rebels. A new front, however, opened up in the south, where another commander mounted a series of attacks resulting in some casualties and leading to the arrest of a number of rebels. At the end of the year some rebel activity resumed in the north of the country; the FRUD representatives in Paris claimed responsibility for two armed attacks: one against five civilian Ethiopian trucks and the other against a Djibouti army patrol.

Following the outbreak of the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia in May,39 Djibouti stationed troops along its own borders with Ethiopia and Eritrea to prevent a spill-over of the conflict into its territory. Several hundred Ethiopians and Eritreans, expelled by the adverse party or returning voluntarily to their countries of origin, found their way into Djibouti while in transit. This movement of people came to a halt when Djibouti and Eritrea broke off diplomatic relations and closed their common border.

As tensions on the political scene started to mount in the run-up to the presidential elections planned for April 1999, increasingly vociferous criticism of the government on the part of the GDR* opposition party led to the arrest of members of the opposition press. Further divisions surfaced in December, when the PND* split into two factions in a struggle for the leadership. Subsequent demonstrations were broken up by riot police, and some 30 PND members were arrested and temporarily detained.

The ICRC carried out regular visits to some 40 security detainees held in the Gabode prison, with the full cooperation of the authorities. The ICRC tracing network continued to be the only means for most of the 20,000 Somali and 700 Ethiopian refugees in the country to remain in contact with relatives abroad.

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39 See pp. 101-104.

* FRUD: Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy, Afar rebel movement
* RPP: Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès (People’s Rally for Progress)
* GDR: Groupe pour la Démocratie et République (Group of Democracy and Republic)
* PND: Parti National Démocratique (National Democratic Party)
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in Djibouti, carried out 5 visits to 39 security detainees in Gabode central prison; supplied the prison with hygiene products and medical supplies, repaired a prison vehicle used for medical evacuations, and revised the prison's sanitation system;
- in December, following a request by Djibouti's Ministry of Justice, carried out a first visit to Obock civil prison to check the conditions of detention of common-law detainees;
- visited 31 detainees held by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania;
- centralized information concerning 95,413 detainees (until April) and over 270,000 unaccompanied minors and their relatives in its databases in Nairobi;
- continued to serve as the main means of communication for Somalis and Ethiopians in 3 refugee camps in Djibouti, exchanging 1,896 Red Cross messages on their behalf in cooperation with the National Societies of the countries where the relatives were living;
- with the Kenya Red Cross, established a tracing service for victims of the bomb blast in Nairobi; centralized information on over 2,000 injured and dead in the immediate aftermath in order to inform their families, and thereafter collected information on 206 families of the deceased to facilitate the delivery of family parcels;
- with the Tanzania Red Cross, continued the tracing programme for Congolese, Burundian and Rwandan refugees; handled 80,670 Red Cross messages on behalf of refugees throughout Tanzania;
- with the assistance of the Tanzanian Red Cross, repatriated and/or reunited 102 unaccompanied children with their families in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- procured locally 1,676 tonnes of relief goods and dispatched 13,055 tonnes for ICRC operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda;
- monitored and evaluated nutritional programmes run by the ICRC in Africa, in particular in Rwanda, Somalia, southern Sudan and Sierra Leone;
- jointly with the Kenya Red Cross, distributed 445.6 tonnes of food, 1.7 tonnes of high-protein biscuits, 3,060 blankets, 800 mats, 600 metres of mosquito netting, 349 kitchen sets, 67 rolls of plastic sheeting, 2,844 metal sheets, 2.2 tonnes of soap, 2,114 agricultural tools, 36 tonnes of seed and 55 tonnes of fertilizer to 25,000 displaced people and other victims of clashes in the Rift Valley;
- together with the Kenya Red Cross, carried out 18 community projects involving rehabilitation of dispensaries and schools, protection of springs and construction of boreholes and cattle dips in Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia districts for the benefit of several thousand people; the communities concerned met the costs of skilled labour and supplied locally available materials;
- dispatched medical supplies for ICRC operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda;
- following the bomb explosion in Nairobi in August, donated emergency drugs to 9 hospitals and clinics and to AMREF; at the request of Kenyatta Hospital, provided equipment to increase the capacity of the orthopaedic and emergency/trauma wards;
- in Tanzania, supplied stocks of medical materials to the regional hospital in Kigoma and to a hospital run by the IRC* in Kibondo to treat Burundian and Congolese war-wounded; transferred a number of war-wounded from isolated villages on Lake Tanganyika to Kigoma hospital;

* AMREF: African Medical Research Foundation
– sent 3 technicians from the Tanzanian limb-fitting centre in Moshi on a 1-month course at the ICRC workshop in Addis Ababa; supplied materials to the Tatcot centre and the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre;

– procured and dispatched 574 tonnes of water and sanitation supplies for ICRC operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda;

– sank 8 boreholes for farming communities in Laikipia and Naivasha in the Rift Valley, equipped them with hand-pumps, and rehabilitated 2 dams for pastoral communities, which benefited 4,000 families;

– jointly with the Kenya Red Cross, carried out a rehabilitation programme to assist victims of past and current clashes in Kakamega, protecting 15 springs and building 6 latrine blocks;

– carried out emergency repair work on 2 boreholes in the conflict area in Wajir West;

– as a pilot project, rehabilitated communal facilities in the village of Ukongoroni in Zanzibar together with the Tanzania Red Cross;

– rehabilitated the water-supply systems in the 3 main prisons of Dar es Salaam in cooperation with the Tanzania Red Cross and the Ministry of Interior;

– built up the capacity of the National Societies in the region in the areas of dissemination, information and promotion;

– helped in the preparation of a plan of action for the Kenya Red Cross and provided the financial, technical and training support needed for its implementation;

– in Kenya, trained some 14 volunteers from 5 regions as field dissemination officers in an effort to enhance grassroots dissemination through the branches;

– helped produce the Kenya Red Cross’s first institutional video, which was then aired on 2 local TV channels to mark World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day;

– produced 2,000 T-shirts for the Kenya Red Cross clubs’ income-generating activities;

– produced giant flipcharts comprising 38 posters in Kiswahili and English to facilitate dissemination in remote areas;

– following the embassy bomb explosion in August, provided the Kenya Red Cross with 6 vehicles, rescue equipment, first-aid materials and 190 additional staff;

– in November/December, organized an African tracing workshop in Kenya, attended by 10 representatives of National Societies from the Horn of Africa, as well as ICRC staff, with a view to establishing an African tracing network;

– continued to serve as a specialist production unit for public information and facilitated relations with the media for all ICRC delegations in the region; regularly briefed journalists and donors on ICRC activities, in particular during the 9-day hostage crisis in Somalia and after the bomb attacks in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam;

– continued to promote the “So Why?” campaign, which received extensive coverage in the Kenyan media; successfully launched the campaign in Djibouti and Tanzania;

– gave lectures on humanitarian law and the Red Cross principles to more than 2,200 recruits, officers and senior officers from battalions, companies and training centres of the three Kenyan armed forces, including some 700 members of the Kenyan security forces;

– in June, took part in the “Natural Fire 98” peace-keeping exercise alongside some 2,000 soldiers from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and the United States.
En 1998, the ICRC visited over 10,000 detainees in Latin America, notably in Peru and Colombia. Delegates interviewed them in private and offered to deliver Red Cross messages to and from their families. In both countries close relatives were also given travel vouchers to visit them. Worldwide, the ICRC visited 212,076 detainees.
The Americas

ICRC delegations:
Colombia, Mexico, Peru

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

Staff
ICRC expatriates: 1  85
National Societies: 1  7
Local employees: 2  277

Total expenditure:
Sfr 35,916,999

Expenditure breakdown:
Protection/tracing: 17,784,148
Relief: 4,332,978
Health activities: 2,100,528
Cooperation with National Societies: 3,107,958
Promotion/dissemination: 3,864,653
Operational support: 2,605,631
Overheads: 2,121,103

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1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1998.
The year under review saw an expansion of ICRC operational activities in the Americas, especially in Colombia and Mexico.

Humanitarian problems became ever more acute in Colombia, where the internal conflict escalated despite attempts to initiate a negotiating process. The violence, which in past years was attributable to clashes between the armed forces and a number of guerrilla forces, was further complicated by the increasing activity of autodefensas (self-defence groups). The ranks of displaced people swelled throughout the country. The frequency and proportions of massacres grew steadily throughout the year; hostage-taking and threats remained commonplace, and at year's end more soldiers and policemen were held in captivity by the armed opposition than ever before. Against this background the ICRC stepped up its presence in Colombia, bringing the number of towns with a delegation, sub-delegation or local office from 12 in January to 15 in December, and the number of expatriates from 43 to 50.

Thanks to an agreement reached with the Mexican authorities, the ICRC also increased its presence in Chiapas, Mexico, where by the end of the year there were 11 expatriate staff working with the National Society to provide protection and assistance to people and communities affected by local tensions.

In Peru, although the internal violence was still on the wane, sporadic incidents were reported in the central regions designated as emergency zones. In the course of the year the delegation was able to resume visits to all categories of security detainees. The Peruvian government also asked the ICRC for its cooperation in giving Peruvian military and police forces systematic training in humanitarian law.

The border dispute between Ecuador and Peru, which had led to armed confrontations between the two countries on numerous occasions over several decades, was resolved by a peace agreement reached through diplomatic means.

In Guatemala, implementation of the peace accords which brought the internal conflict to an end after three decades of violence proved to be extremely difficult. Many of the problems at the root of the conflict remained unresolved.

Staff specializing in the dissemination of humanitarian law among the armed and security forces were stationed in Guatemala City and Buenos Aires and worked throughout the continent to develop such activities, often with the help of National Societies. Among the largest national programmes of this type was the one carried out for the security forces in Brazil. At the regional level, the ICRC encouraged the armed forces of all the countries covered to incorporate humanitarian law in courses of military instruction. It held regional seminars on the subject for the military of the entire continent, and also specifically for those in certain sub-regions (such as the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean and Central America), with a view to encouraging exchanges and cooperation in this field.

The delegations in the Americas pursued their efforts to ensure that humanitarian law was given effect in practice, notably by supporting the establishment and operation of national committees for implementation of this body of law. Thanks to the
adoption by the OAS* of resolutions in support of humanitarian law at its General Assembly held in Venezuela in June, this subject was given pride of place throughout the continent. With the assistance of legal advisers, the ICRC delegations in Guatemala City, Buenos Aires and Bogotá continued to urge ratification of all the humanitarian treaties, encouraged the creation of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law and gave them follow-up support. Delegates throughout the Americas campaigned for acceptance of the idea of declaring the Americas a mine-free hemisphere, a concept which had been put forward by the OAS. For practical reasons, this continent-wide effort concentrated first on establishing a mine-free zone in Central America.

* OAS: Organization of American States
The election in June of a Presidential candidate who had peace talks high on his agenda did much to raise hopes, but did little to alleviate the internal violence. The new President took the unprecedented initiative of holding a meeting with the leadership of the FARC* in the hope of setting a negotiating process in motion. The FARC and the ELN,* the other major armed opposition group, stepped up attacks on government forces throughout the year, while at the same time seeking ways to initiate a dialogue. The autodefensas, or self-defence groups, increased their activities in the north and in coastal areas and extended them to other regions which had previously been spared.

Many observers saw the very tenuous beginnings of direct dialogue between the government and the FARC and the ongoing broad discussions between the ELN and representatives of civil society as moves towards a peace process. But that process was both fragile and difficult, and there were numerous setbacks and delays.

The election of the new President also made it necessary for the ICRC to renew its contacts with government officials. In August, the Delegate-General for the Americas and the head of delegation met the new head of State and cabinet ministers in Bogotá and discussed the ICRC’s relations with the Colombian government.

Meanwhile, the political violence grew worse. As previously, it took the form of assassinations, hostage-taking, threats and massacres. Mass killings were nothing new, but they increased in intensity and frequency throughout the year. In Puerto Elvira, some 20 people were massacred on 4 May; in mid-May, another 20 were

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* FARC: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces)
* ELN: Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army)
summarily executed in Barrancabermeja; in Mitu, a department capital near the Brazilian border, 10 civilians and 25 policemen were killed during a major FARC attack on 1 November; in Machuca, Antioquia, 70 perished and another 60 were badly burnt as a result of an attack on an oil pipeline in October. Apart from the worst massacres, there were scores of attacks on civilians and the number of direct victims of the violence rose steadily. The ICRC remained in touch with both main guerrilla groups, for the first time meeting face to face with the leadership of the FARC, and further developed its contacts with self-defence units at all levels and in all regions of the country in order to remind them of their obligation not to target civilians.

The self-defence groups continued to consolidate, notably through a national umbrella body, the AUC,* and to develop their operations, for example by increasing attacks on civilians in zones reputed to be under the influence of the armed opposition. These attacks, which became more systematic during the year, prompted the displacement, for the first time, of tens of thousands of people from those areas. Late in the year, as the army started to try to curb such activities, clashes were reported for the first time between the armed forces and certain self-defence groups.

The insecurity resulting not only from massacres but also from constant hostage-taking, threats, harassment and isolated killings created a climate of fear which caused tens of thousands of people to leave their homes. Some left en masse, while others simply set out on their own. As the phenomenon grew throughout the year, displacement of Colombians became a very serious problem in humanitarian terms.

Following the National Society's suspension of its own programme of aid for individual displaced persons, in October the delegation increased its activities for them. All told, some 130,000 displaced people received assistance, nearly 90,000 of whom had been part of mass population displacements (defined as displacements in groups of 50 or more). The presence of delegates in the field also represented a unique and impartial source of moral support for victims of the violence – be they displaced or not – and for their families.

Owing to the general climate of insecurity, certain regions lacked basic services, including medical care. Through projects delegated to the German and Norwegian National Societies, and working with the Colombian Red Cross, the ICRC ensured that mobile health teams were able to provide medical care on a monthly basis in some of these areas, including the Riosucio region of Chocó department in Urabá, and along the Caguán river in Caquetá.

* AUC: Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-defence Groups of Colombia)
Visits continued to people detained by the government for security reasons. In January the ICRC handed over to the Ministry of Justice and the INPEC* a summary report on visits carried out to places of detention in 1996 and 1997. The situation in the prisons remained extremely difficult owing to overcrowding, violence and lack of personnel and resources.

As the main guerrilla force, the FARC, increased attacks on military and police outposts, it captured hundreds of men. By year’s end the group reportedly held some 320 soldiers and policemen. It never made available a comprehensive list of those captured, thus leaving many families unaware of whether their relatives were in captivity or had died. The ICRC, for its part, constantly called on the FARC to produce a comprehensive list of names of the people it had captured and to allow visits by delegates, but to no avail. Delegates were, however, able to forward Red Cross messages between a few of the captives and their family members.

There was a very large number of Colombian and international non-governmental organizations active in fields such as human rights, material assistance for conflict victims and aid for the displaced. During the year the ICRC completed a study of the various agencies and their responses to the problem of the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, in order to take stock of needs and assess the resources available to cover them.

The delegation made several studies available to the parties to the conflict with the aim of facilitating negotiations or helping to find solutions to problems of humanitarian concern. For example, in September the ICRC presented the government and the FARC with a working paper on the ICRC’s experience with the release of prisoners in countries such as El Salvador and Croatia, which had recently undergone peace processes and had faced problems similar to those in Colombia. Other ICRC studies addressed the question of judicial guarantees and the protection of personnel and facilities involved in providing medical care. Together with the Javeriana University in Bogotá, the delegation also took part in the production of a brochure entitled "La Paz sobre la Mesa" (Peace on the table), which outlined the positions of the parties to the conflict and was distributed widely as a supplement in a national weekly magazine.

* INPEC: National Penitentiaries and Prisons Institute
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- saw 2,527 security detainees, including 1,273 for the first time, in the course of 419 visits to 185 places of detention;
- during visits, provided clothing, personal hygiene articles and recreational items for detainees;
- paid 2,603 travel fares for family members to visit their relatives in prison;
- paid for the return to their homes of 139 people after their release from captivity;
- documented 1,119 cases (concerning 2,163 people) involving allegations of violations of humanitarian law;
- made representations to the authorities, to the armed opposition and to self-defence groups concerning the cases of 1,816 people;
- paid for the transport to safer areas of 16,126 people;
- provided its services for the release of 158 civilians and 25 policemen and members of the armed services who had been captured by armed groups and were freed under ICRC auspices;
- handled over 1,200 Red Cross messages sent by or to detainees, displaced people and others who had lost contact with their families, including a number of soldiers captured by the ELN;
- in the regions most severely affected by the conflict, distributed food parcels, cooking utensils, hygiene kits and mats to 137,431 displaced people;
- covered the cost of medical care for 111 people wounded as a result of the conflict;
- provided basic medical supplies and assistance to displaced persons and to hospitals;
- through a project delegated to the National Societies of Germany and Norway, and working with staff from the Colombian Red Cross, provided medical supplies for mobile health teams, along with logistic support and funding, thus providing basic care for about 18,362 people in Urabá and along the Caguán river;
- under a cooperation agreement concluded in February with the Colombian Red Cross and covering 11 projects, worked closely with the National Society on subjects such as training for its staff, dissemination for the armed forces, security during field operations, communication, fundraising and strengthening of the National Society’s administrative structure;
- together with the Colombian Red Cross, regularly held courses and seminars on humanitarian law for the military;
- in mid-year, at the time of the World Cup football competition, carried out a large-scale campaign entitled "Juegue limpio" (Play fair), using media spots, posters and other means to relate the message of fair play in sports to respect for the law of war;
- with the help of the delegation’s legal specialist, continued to provide the authorities with legal and technical support for the adoption of national measures for the implementation of humanitarian law, notably in relation to the protection of the emblem, the repression of violations of the law and measures to avoid recruitment of children into the armed forces;
- held some 654 dissemination sessions and events reaching over 37,000 people, including members of the military, the armed opposition, self-defence groups, government officials and civilians.
increasing the ICRC’s presence in Chiapas

cooperation with the National Society

visits to people deprived of their freedom

MEXICO

While no armed clashes occurred in 1998, the tension in the southern state of Chiapas, which had culminated in the killing of 45 peasants in Acteal in December 1997, prompted the ICRC to seek to increase its presence in the region.

On 26 May, the Mexican government and the ICRC finally reached an agreement whereby the ICRC was allowed to increase its presence in Chiapas. A survey carried out with the Mexican Red Cross from 12 June to 5 July determined the needs to be met until the end of the year and the programmes to be implemented: these included food aid for people affected by the prevailing insecurity, water and sanitation work, an agricultural programme and continuing support for the health activities of the Mexican Red Cross in the region. In September the ICRC delegation in Mexico City opened a sub-delegation in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, with a staff of nine expatriates and 12 local employees. This enabled the ICRC to monitor the situation of civilians in areas affected by tension.

Following the survey conducted in June and July, the Mexican Red Cross and the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement on 31 July to establish the framework for Red Cross action in Chiapas, in accordance with the Seville Agreement. Consequently, the ICRC allocated additional funds for cooperation projects and assistance for displaced persons was increased.

Delegates visited prisoners falling within the ICRC’s mandate throughout Mexico, including persons detained in connection with the situation in Chiapas. The ICRC transported EZLN* representatives to a four-day meeting in San Cristóbal de las Casas in mid-November with the COCOPA,* a body comprising members of the main political parties represented in the federal legislature and having the aim of encouraging the reconciliation process.

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3 See the ICRC’s 1997 Annual Report, p. 19.
* EZLN: Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Army)
* COCOPA: Comisión de Concordancia y Pacificación (Commission for Concordance and Pacification)
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 100 security detainees, including 57 for the first time, in 10 places of detention;
- monitored the situation of civilians and displaced people in Chiapas, and in particular in the Los Altos region;
- beginning in October, temporarily assumed responsibility for a food aid programme run since March by the German Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross for about 10,500 people affected by the insecurity in Chiapas;
- started a programme for the construction of agricultural silos and the cultivation of vegetable plots in Chiapas;
- provided financial and logistic support for 3 first-aid posts run by the Mexican Red Cross and for medical teams in Chiapas, and continued to support the development of dissemination activities by holding 4 seminars for National Society dissemination officers;
- together with UNHCR and the National Human Rights Commission, conducted or took part in university seminars on humanitarian law, refugee rights and human rights attended by professors from 16 universities;
- organized a seminar on humanitarian law for Mexican non-governmental organizations.
Ecuador and Peru succeeded in resolving their border dispute through diplomatic means. There were, however, a few incidents, including mine explosions, during the year.

The remnants of the two opposition groups were active only in certain regions, such as the Huallaga valley and the central part of Peru around Ayacucho. Once again, there were fewer clashes and hence fewer victims, but the internal conflict continued to affect civilians in those regions. An important part of the delegation's work consisted in visiting communities and meeting the authorities to monitor the situation of civilians, handling Red Cross messages and providing victims of the violence with medical and relief supplies, but the ICRC's main activities in Peru remained visits to places of detention and the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

Peru was hard hit by the effects of both the El Niño climatic phenomenon and the Asian financial crisis. While El Niño adversely affected agriculture and fishing and battered the country's infrastructure, the collapse of Peru's Asian trading partners sapped the manufacturing and raw-materials sectors. For the government, the resulting increased costs and lost tax revenue led to cutbacks in funding for social services and for the country's prisons, a development which left many people in dire straits. For example, there was an increasing need for assistance for detainees, as in some cases little or no funds were available for medical treatment, hygiene articles and other basic necessities. The ICRC responded by broadening the scope of its assistance to include ophthalmological care for inmates, increased distributions of hygiene articles and the funding of treatment for prisoners in hospitals, along with other forms of medical care and assistance.

The delegation continued its dialogue with the authorities concerning the harsh conditions of detention of security prisoners, and recommended the transfer of such prisoners to facilities closer to their homes, as some were held in places at
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 3,788 people detained in connection with the internal conflict, including 794 who were seen for the first time, in 171 places of detention;
- supplied 22 prison clinics with medicine and other medical supplies;
- paid 25,217 travel fares, allowing 2,251 people to visit detained relatives up to 12 times during the year;
- carried out eye-tests on 1,312 detainees and donated 433 pairs of spectacles;
- located 13 people sought by their relatives;
- handled 722 Red Cross messages;
- provided medical supplies and medicines to hospitals which admitted 101 detainees and cared for 895 on an outpatient basis;
- covered the cost of medical care and hospitalization for 182 people who had been wounded in the conflict and were being treated in hospitals run by the Ministry of Health;
- distributed food, clothing, blankets and cooking utensils to 3,903 civilians affected by the internal violence;
- supported the activities and development of the Peruvian Red Cross by providing logistic back-up for a water purification programme implemented by the Peruvian and German Red Cross Societies in Mancora, giving the Peruvian Red Cross a vehicle for transporting sick and wounded, and financing training seminars for volunteers of the National Society;
- held 141 dissemination sessions on the basic standards of humanitarian law, ICRC activities and the Red Cross principles for some 7,000 people, including members of the military, the police, students, medical staff and civilians.
resumption of visits

spreading knowledge of humanitarian law

great distances from their families. Travel fares were paid for 12 family visits instead of eight as previously.

Visits to people detained in connection with the internal conflict, which had been virtually suspended until December 1997 as a consequence of the hostage crisis at the Japanese ambassador's residence, resumed fully in 1998 thanks to a decision of the President of the Republic. However, the ICRC was not able to resume its activities in places of detention run by the Ministry of the Interior (i.e. in DINCOTE* facilities) until October, when the authorities there once again agreed to the organization's standard visiting procedures. Specifically, as from October delegates were allowed to interview inmates with no witnesses present.

For the first time, courses on human rights and international humanitarian law were included in the regular training programmes for the Peruvian armed forces and police. The ICRC helped draw up the programme and assisted in teaching these courses, the first of which began in November. The delegation also continued its activities to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among other target groups throughout the country.

BRASILIA
Regional delegation
(Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela)

In Brazil, the ICRC once again focused on spreading knowledge of humanitarian law among the military police and the armed forces and on information activities. With the assistance of the Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law, the ICRC regional delegation offered legal advice to the authorities of Ecuador and Venezuela with a view to establishing national committees and plans of action for the implementation of humanitarian law in those countries.

The ICRC, together with the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, initiated a major programme for the dissemination of humanitarian law and knowledge of human rights among the ranks of the 400,000-strong military police, the largest security force in Brazil. The training programme, which first focused on a core group of about 20 instructors and eventually reached over 300 trainers from nearly all the Brazilian states, also addressed techniques and tactics to minimize the use of force and ensure that when force had to be used it was not excessive.

The delegation assisted in the training of navy instructors specializing in humanitarian law, sent a Brazilian army legal expert to attend a course on

* DINCOTE: Dirección Nacional contra el Terrorismo (anti-terrorist unit)
humanitarian law in San Remo, Italy, and took part in numerous national and international seminars on peace-keeping organized by the Brazilian military.

The holding of presidential and legislative elections increased political stability in Ecuador, and the conclusion of a peace agreement concerning the border dispute with Peru did much to reduce regional tensions. The delegation urged the government to establish an interministerial committee for the implementation of humanitarian law and worked closely with the Ecuadorean Red Cross, which was entrusted by the Ministry of Defence with the task of spreading knowledge of the law of war among the military.

During the election period at the end of the year the ICRC based a delegate in the capital and helped prepare the Venezuelan Red Cross to take action in the event of election-related violence. The ICRC also developed dissemination activities for the armed forces, in particular by attending seminars held by the newly established human rights and humanitarian law service of the Ministry of Defence and by providing support and training for the service’s staff. The government still did not reply to the ICRC’s offer of services, submitted in June 1996 and relating to the possibility of visiting people detained in the region near the Colombian border and of giving instruction in humanitarian law to military units stationed there.

On 23 July Venezuela acceded to the two Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

**Brazilian armed forces**

**Ecuador/Peru peace agreement**

**elections in Venezuela**

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**IN 1998 THE ICRC:**

- helped the Venezuelan Red Cross improve its members' knowledge of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian law;

- provided advice to the Venezuelan authorities with a view to extending the mandate of the National Human Rights Commission to include national implementation of humanitarian law.

- held 21 3-week courses for instructors of the Brazilian military police, with a total of 320 officers attending;

- provided material and financial support for the Ecuadorean Red Cross, which held approximately 20 courses on the law of war for members of the Ecuadorean military;
BUENOS AIRES
Regional delegation
(Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay)

As in previous years, most of the delegation's work consisted in spreading knowledge of humanitarian law in military and academic circles, encouraging the adoption of national implementation measures, notably by supporting the activities of committees for the implementation of humanitarian law, and urging ratification of various instruments. On 30 January Paraguay filed a declaration recognizing the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into alleged violations of humanitarian law treaties, as provided for in Article 90 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions.

In accordance with an agreement concluded with the Bolivian government in 1997, the delegation carried out visits to people detained for security reasons in La Paz and El Alto. In December, it conducted visits to security detainees in Chile.

The ICRC took part in military exercises and seminars organized by the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Argentine Training Center for Peacekeeping Forces to prepare troops for peace-keeping operations. The delegation also participated in courses on peace-keeping and international observer missions throughout the region.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in March, visited 11 prisoners held in 3 places of detention in Bolivia;
- in December, visited 65 prisoners held in 3 places of detention in Chile;
- trained staff of the Argentine Red Cross, the Chilean Red Cross and the Uruguayan Red Cross in dissemination techniques and other subjects related to the Movement, and concluded 5 cooperation agreements with the Bolivian Red Cross covering areas such as dissemination and information;
- took part, with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Chilean Red Cross, in the international Scouts jamboree held near Santiago at the end of December, organizing interactive presentations on landmines, children in armed conflict, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of modern technology in disaster preparedness;
- took part in the work of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay;
- held seminars for legislators and members of the judiciary and other high-ranking officials in Argentina and Bolivia;
- organized seminars, gave presentations and provided instruction for military and police instructors, officers and staff in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay;
- took part in the 10-day United Forces '98 military exercise, held in Paraguay, which brought together some 300 members of the armed forces of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela;
- participated in the Southern Cross military exercise which included the armed forces of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay;
- took part in the Blue Condor military peace-keeping exercise organized jointly near Buenos Aires by the British and Argentine governments and attended by members of the military, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and police forces of many countries of the Americas, France and Spain;
- held seminars and gave presentations at universities and other educational establishments in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay;
- mounted photo exhibitions on the theme "Man in a World of Conflict" and on ICRC activities in Argentina, Chile and Paraguay.
GUATEMALA CITY

Regional delegation
(Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname and other countries in the Caribbean)

When hurricane Mitch, the worst storm to hit Central America for decades, wrought havoc in the region in November, the ICRC, under the coordination of the Federation (the lead agency for the Movement's international activities in the event of natural disaster), worked closely with the National Societies concerned. The regional delegation sent a tracing delegate to help in the search for family members who had gone missing. Above and beyond the thousands of lives it claimed, the storm caused severe damage to infrastructure in Honduras and Nicaragua and greatly set back mine-clearance efforts in the latter, as many landmines were unearthed and washed away to new, unmarked locations.

The security situation stabilized somewhat in Nicaragua and El Salvador, which had been affected by internal conflicts until the early 1990s. In Guatemala, too, the peace process continued, but the political and security situation remained more uncertain, as many of the social problems at the root of the conflict remained to be addressed. In Panama, the spillover effect of the internal conflict in Colombia caused hardship for inhabitants of the eastern region of Darién.

In Haiti a poor security situation became worse at year's end, as the government was all but paralysed by a political stand-off.

The delegation's main activities in the region were related to dissemination and implementation of humanitarian law, cooperation with National Societies, and visits and assistance in prisons in Haiti. One of its major achievements was the adoption, by eight Spanish-speaking countries of Central America and the Caribbean, of a common strategy for the instruction of the international law of armed conflict in their standard training programmes for military and security forces. This was the first time a common commitment had been made at regional level to teach the law of war to such personnel on a permanent basis.

In February the regional delegation, together with the ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law and the Panamanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, held a regional seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law for government representatives, members of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law and university staff from eight countries in the region.
Throughout the year the ICRC maintained contact with government officials in Guatemala, and conducted missions to Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama and the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean in order to encourage ratification of the 1980 Weapons Convention, the 1998 Ottawa treaty and the 1977 Additional Protocols and to provide technical advice concerning the adoption of legislation to protect the emblem, repress war crimes and prohibit anti-personnel mines. The delegation actively supported the work of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law in El Salvador and Panama, and provided advice on the establishment of similar bodies in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago.

The ICRC also maintained contact throughout the year with universities with a view to including courses on humanitarian law in their curricula, and with the armed forces and security services of the countries of the region. Two police instructors, from Jamaica and Panama, were recruited by the delegation to spread knowledge of humanitarian law and humanitarian principles among police forces throughout the region.

The delegation carried on with the Maya project, a dissemination and information programme designed to spread the message of humanitarian law in indigenous languages and to relate it to the history and experiences of the Maya population of Guatemala.

The delegation kept up regular contacts with parliamentarians, government leaders and other officials to promote acceptance of the International Fact-Finding Commission, ratification of the 1977 Additional Protocols, the 1998 Ottawa treaty and the Statute of the International Criminal Court, to encourage the establishment of national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law and to urge the adoption of implementing legislation, especially in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago.

Under ICRC auspices, the directors of the dissemination and communication services of the National Societies of Spanish-speaking countries in the region held a six-day meeting in Antigua, Guatemala, in June to share experiences and discuss strategies. In September a similar meeting was held in Saint Kitts for dissemination directors from the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean.

The ICRC concluded a cooperation agreement with the Canadian and the Nicaraguan National Societies for the implementation of a mines-awareness campaign in Nicaragua. The agreement also covered Red Cross activities aimed at marking mined areas and a programme whereby the Nicaraguan Red Cross received ambulances so that it could provide a first-aid service for army mine-clearance operations.

In Panama, the ICRC initiated a cooperation programme to help the National Society establish a branch in the Darién region, and launched a relief programme
ICRC mission in Haiti

activities for prisoners

summary report on visits to prisons in 1997

for several hundred people suffering from the spillover effects of the internal conflict in Colombia.

On 23 September Grenada acceded to the two Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

Haiti remained hamstrung by a severe political crisis in 1998, with no Prime Minister until the very end of the year and a number of ministries left with no one in charge. In this context of political instability, the economy continued to flounder. The justice system, too, remained paralysed. Four-fifths of the country's prisoners were awaiting trial, and generally faced a wait of more than two years before their cases would be brought before a court.

The ICRC's activities in Haiti chiefly comprised work in prisons and jails and the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

Overcrowding, poor nutrition, lack of clean water and inadequate sanitation facilities were among the main problems which continued to plague places of detention. The ICRC carried out regular visits to the country's prisons and jails to assess conditions of detention and to provide medical care and material assistance. When major problems were observed specific projects were carried out, generally with local health and sanitation specialists.

The delegation played a coordinating role, bringing together the Haitian authorities and representatives of NGOs and international organizations to discuss the various problems facing the prison system. For example, it immediately called for consultation when, in November, the ICRC was notified that a Dutch NGO which had provided up to 70 per cent of the food consumed in the country's prisons intended to phase out its assistance programme at the end of September 1999.

In early March the ICRC handed over to the authorities a summary report on visits it had carried out in 1997 in 18 places of detention throughout the country. The report was the fourth in a series submitted to the authorities since 1994.

As a follow-up to the report, on 19 August the ICRC sent a formal letter to the Minister of Justice, with copies to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Police and the National Penitentiary Administration, reminding them of their obligations.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in Panama, conducted 2 visits to 1 place of detention, where delegates saw 5 detainees held in connection with the armed intervention of 1989;
- in Haiti, monitored the health status and conditions of detention of over 3,700 prisoners held in 20 places of detention, followed the cases of 26 individual security detainees, carried out water and sanitation work and took other measures to remedy the hygiene situation;
- assisted the National Societies of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Panama in conducting training programmes for their staff, and in particular for dissemination officers;
- in Nicaragua, with the Canadian Red Cross and the Nicaraguan Red Cross, implemented a mine-awareness programme, and provided ambulances for the National Society's first-aid service for army mine-clearance teams;
- together with the Federation, helped the National Society of the Dominican Republic to draw up new statutes conforming more closely to the principles of the Movement;
- in Haiti, supported the Haitian National Red Cross Society's dissemination service by working closely with its dissemination officer, and gave presentations on numerous occasions to a wide variety of target groups, including police officers, municipal authorities, future diplomats and others;
- in Cuba, continued to support the work of the International Humanitarian Law Study Centre run by the Cuban Red Cross in Havana, mainly targeting members of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces, and supported specific National Society dissemination activities;
- in El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Panama, carried out dissemination activities for the armed forces and the police and/or encouraged incorporation of humanitarian law in their training programmes, and gave a 5-day course on humanitarian law and dissemination for instructors from the defence and police forces of Barbados, Antigua, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica.
WASHINGTON
Regional delegation
(Canada, United States)

Activities focused on promoting humanitarian law, maintaining contact with the authorities of Canada and the United States and liaising with international organizations, and in particular the OAS. For example, in March the ICRC presented a report to the OAS Permanent Council’s Committee on Political and Juridical Affairs regarding measures taken by member States to implement humanitarian law.

The delegation urged the United States government to adhere to numerous instruments of humanitarian law, including the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions and the Ottawa treaty banning landmines. It also encouraged the authorities to support the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Late in the year the ICRC Director of Operations visited Washington, where he met officials of the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the United States Agency for International Development and the American Red Cross and discussed the ICRC’s activities and programmes worldwide. ICRC delegates also had meetings with high-ranking officers of the United States military, including the Southern Command in Miami, to discuss the humanitarian situation in countries of the Americas where the ICRC was active.

In Canada, the ICRC assisted in the creation of a national committee for the implementation of humanitarian law, which was established on 18 March. An ICRC delegate specializing in dissemination and communication techniques was seconded to the Canadian Red Cross for the year.

The delegation took part in numerous seminars, conferences and discussions held by the United States military, academic institutions and various international and regional organizations (including those in the OAS and UN systems) on humanitarian law, the International Criminal Court, peace-keeping operations, the humanitarian situation in countries where the ICRC was operating, the problem of landmines and other matters. Specifically, delegates gave presentations or took part in courses on ICRC activities and the law of armed conflict at the Naval War College, the army School of the Americas, the National Defense University and the Inter-American Defense College.

As in previous years, in February the ICRC visited one Panamanian prisoner of war captured during the United States intervention of 1989.
Fresh water and proper sanitation go a long way to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases. In war-torn areas, water supply systems are often damaged or fall into disrepair: the ICRC spent 25 million Swiss francs on water and sanitation projects in 1998. Many of these were carried out with the help of local Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and teams sent out by participating National Societies.
Indian sub-continent

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: 1 192
National Societies: 1 41
Local employees: 2 1,764

Total expenditure: Sfr 92,833,180

Expenditure breakdown:
Protection/tracing: 24,678,533
Relief: 31,193,777
Health activities: 18,461,681
Cooperation with National Societies: 2,779,361
Promotion/dissemination: 3,452,958
Operational support: 7,223,411
Overheads: 5,043,459

1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1998.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
When the economic downturn of 1997 took a further plunge in 1998 with the crash of the Asian stock market, the repercussions were felt in almost every country in the region. The social effects were most acute in Indonesia and Malaysia, where many people found themselves below the poverty line for the first time. A series of natural disasters brought additional hardship for thousands already worn down by impoverishment, political instability or persistent conflict.

War-torn Afghanistan suffered the effects of two earthquakes which devastated the north-east in February and May. The ICRC, acting as lead agency for the Red Cross and Red Crescent relief operation, coordinated the distribution of non-food supplies to the quake victims. Providing vulnerable groups with food and material assistance remained the mainstay of the ICRC’s work in Afghanistan, the scene of the organization’s largest relief operation worldwide. Increasing emphasis, however, was placed on helping the Afghans to regain their self-sufficiency. Delegates also continued visits to detainees held by the warring parties with the aim of ensuring that their living conditions and treatment met normal standards.

In the wake of the US missile strikes on Afghanistan in August and the killing of a UN military observer, all expatriates of non-governmental organizations and UN agencies withdrew from the country. For a while the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were the sole international humanitarian organizations fully operational in the Afghan arena. Towards year’s end some foreign aid workers returned.

One of the ICRC’s foremost concerns in 1998 was Indonesia, where humanitarian needs rose sharply following a series of natural disasters and the unprecedented economic crisis. Thousands took to the streets calling for political and economic reform, and the country’s President for 32 years was forced to resign.

The regional delegation in Jakarta responded rapidly to the violent demonstrations by increasing its medical assistance to Red Cross branches involved in the treatment and evacuation of the wounded. Its long-term approach centred on training members of the Indonesian Red Cross Society to deal with situations of unrest. In July the ICRC’s relief and medical operation in drought-stricken Irian Jaya came to an end as the nutritional status of the local population had vastly improved. During the year the ICRC resumed its activities in Aceh to monitor the situation of some 500 Acehnese expelled from Malaysia. The delegation’s activities in East Timor, focusing on health promotion, water and sanitation projects and visits to detainees, continued as in previous years. In Myanmar surveys were conducted in the border provinces and preparations were made for a health programme to be implemented in Shan state in 1999. More discussions were held on the question of ICRC access to places of detention in the country.

In Sri Lanka the "no-mercy" war dragged on, with government forces doggedly struggling to secure a land route to the Jaffna peninsula. Countless combatants on both sides lost their lives in fierce fighting in the Vanni region. Although civilians sel-
dom suffered the direct effects of hostilities, the plight of the displaced and resident inhabitants of the Vanni deteriorated further. The ICRC provided them with material assistance and carried out water and sanitation work to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases. The ICRC’s role as a neutral intermediary between the warring parties remained of crucial importance.

The year in Cambodia was marked by the impending demise of the Khmer Rouge, with the death of Pol Pot and the mass defection of the movement’s leaders and combatants. Nationwide elections were held in July. However, opposition dissent regarding the validity of the polls gave rise to mass demonstrations, often ending in violence. The ICRC stepped up its medical assistance to health facilities treating the wounded and its visits to detainees. Landmines remained a serious obstacle to self-sufficiency in rural areas and the ICRC continued to fit new amputees with artificial limbs.

Delegates based in New Delhi pursued visits to detainees held in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The delegation also closely followed developments in India’s troubled north-east. Work in Bangladesh focused on cooperation with the National Society, together with the Federation, monitoring of the situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and preparations to open an office in Dhaka. The signing of a new agreement with the Bhutanese authorities ensured the continuation of visits to detainees held for "anti-national activities". A similar agreement reached with the Nepalese government paved the way for visits to detainees which began in December.

The ICRC’s delegation in Pakistan, particularly its sub-delegation in Peshawar, remained the logistic pivot for ICRC operations in Afghanistan. In Pakistan itself delegates worked to promote knowledge of and compliance with international humanitarian law among decision-makers and the armed forces. The delegation continued to support National Society health projects in Karachi and along the line of control, where an upsurge in violence forced thousands to flee. The recently displaced received assistance from the ICRC and the National Society.

ICRC delegates based in the Philippines continued to visit detainees held in connection with insurgency in the country and assisted civilians affected by the unrest, particularly in Mindanao. They also promoted knowledge of humanitarian law throughout the Pacific region and encouraged countries and autonomous territories to adopt national measures for the implementation of this body of international law. The peace process in Bougainville remained on track and thousands of displaced people and refugees returned to their homes.

The ICRC’s delegation in the Far East, Bangkok, continued to focus on spreading knowledge of humanitarian law, securing the ratification of humanitarian treaties and having the law of armed conflict incorporated in national military training. Discussions were under way with the Chinese authorities with a view to visiting detainees. No progress was made in efforts to encourage the two Koreas to find a humanitarian solution to the plight of family members separated since the 1950-1953 Korean war.
In 1998 the war-weary population of Afghanistan not only endured the direct and indirect consequences of 19 years of bitter conflict, but also suffered natural disasters. In February and May earthquakes shook remote villages in the north-eastern provinces of Badakhshan and Takhar. In coordination with the United Nations, NGOs, the Afghan Red Crescent Society and the Federation, the ICRC organized the evacuation of the seriously injured and launched a major relief operation. For the first time, the ICRC acted as lead agency in an International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement operation conducted in the context of a natural disaster in a war-torn country, in accordance with the 1997 Seville Agreement.

During the first six months of the year the front lines in the struggle between the largely Pashtun Taliban, representing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, and the United Islamic Front for Salvation of Afghanistan (UIFSA, also referred to as the northern coalition), representing the Islamic State of Afghanistan, wavered with no significant gains on either side. Inter-factional tension and fighting within the coalition, particularly in Mazar-i-Sharif, was a major concern for the international aid community. Lack of respect for the red cross emblem and ICRC premises and personnel prompted the temporary evacuation of delegates and medical staff from the area.

In July the Taliban launched a major offensive in the north, taking the towns of Maimana, Shibirgham and Mazar-i-Sharif within a few weeks. The domino effect resulted in the fall of the towns of Taloqan, Baghlan and Bamyan to the Kandahar-based movement. The Taliban were able to capture large parts of central and northern Afghanistan, thereby gaining control of almost 90% of the country.

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The UIFSA was mainly made up of the Jamiat-i-Islami, the Jumbesh and the two factions of the Hazara Hezb-i-Wahdat parties.
At year's end the coalition's counter-offensive enabled it to win back strategically important territory in Kunduz and Baghlan. Towns in Badakhshan and Takhar provinces, including Taloqan, fell to the northern coalition.

Allegations of violations of international humanitarian law by the warring parties were rife, particularly in Mazar-i-Sharif. This was a cause of grave concern for the ICRC, which repeatedly reminded both sides of their obligation to respect civilian life and property and to conduct hostilities according to the rules laid down in humanitarian law.

The Taliban's request that all international NGOs in Kabul relocate to the city's polytechnical college, together with an increasing number of restrictions placed on their work, led to the withdrawal of many aid workers. The missile attack by the United States on camps alleged to be run by Osama Ben Laden on 20 August fuelled anti-Western sentiments, which led to the killing of a UN military observer. The remaining NGOs and UN agencies subsequently withdrew their expatriate personnel. For a while, the ICRC and the Federation were the sole international humanitarian organizations present in the Afghan arena. Although some NGOs resumed work in Kabul towards the end of the year, the absence of other humanitarian players, particularly UN agencies, was a source of much concern to the ICRC, which feared repercussions on certain vulnerable categories of the population, especially children.

Despite the logistic constraints and other problems encountered in the ever-changing Afghan context, the ICRC was able to pursue its traditional activities on behalf of war victims. Delegates visited detainees held by all parties. They checked material and psychological conditions of detention and distributed essential items to protect the detainees from health hazards and the bitter Afghan winter. Reports containing the delegates' findings and recommendations were submitted to the relevant authorities. Between August and October the ICRC faced major difficulties in accomplishing its protection mandate. Delegates did not receive authorization from the Taliban authorities to visit those captured or arrested during the movement's latest offensive in the north and in the Bamyan region. Contact with ethnic minorities in and around Mazar-i-Sharif was also restricted. Following several approaches to the Taliban leadership, the ICRC was given the green light to resume its visits to Taliban-administered prisons as of mid-October.

The ICRC supervised the release of detainees held by both sides and offered logistic and financial support for their return home. It also acted as a neutral intermediary between Afghanistan and Iran in September and October by repatriating the mortal remains of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist killed in Mazar-i-Sharif. The ICRC also assisted in the repatriation of 36 Iranian prisoners.4

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4 See p. 283.
With 80% of the Afghan population involved in farming, agricultural support remained of paramount importance and contributed significantly to food availability. The delegation continued its traditional agricultural programmes, such as tool production, establishment of fruit and vegetable nurseries, plant protection, the planting of trees, seed distribution and the rehabilitation of vital irrigation systems. To promote self-sufficiency and to prevent dependency on external aid, more food-for-work projects were launched in both rural and urban communities. These ranged from repairs to an irrigation system in the Shamali plain, one of the country's most fertile areas, to poultry projects for 60 vulnerable families in Kabul. Four ICRC-supported veterinary clinics in Kabul and the Panjshir valley treated animals and vaccinated them against common diseases. An anthrax spore vaccine was produced and used in the ICRC clinics, as well as in those of the FAO.*

The ICRC was the focal point for the provision of non-food assistance (food supplies were provided by WFP*) to the victims of the two earthquakes in the north-east. The emergency operation was hampered by the remoteness of the region and severe weather conditions. Nevertheless, relief goods dispatched by truck from the ICRC's sub-delegations in Mazar-i-Sharif and Pul-i-Khumri and its delegation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, reached the stricken area only a few days after the disaster. An ICRC-chartered Hercules aircraft flew in blankets, plastic sheeting, tents, cooking sets and soap from Peshawar, Pakistan. These supplies were then air-dropped near Rostaq, the epicentre of the February earthquake, and distributed to some 28,000 beneficiaries by means ranging from helicopters to caravans of donkeys. A similar programme was launched for the 60,000 people affected by the May earthquake, with many helicopters used to bring aid to people living in remote areas and to evacuate casualties whose injuries could not be treated on the spot.

Although conditions in rural areas were often harsh and rudimentary, it was urban centres that suffered most from the effects of the seemingly never-ending conflict. Staple foods were not always readily available and spiralling prices put them out of reach for many Afghans. On average, a breadwinner's salary covered only 20% of the family’s basic needs and up to 50% of the population was dependent on some form of external aid. The ICRC’s relief programme in Kabul focused on 15,000 families** headed by widows and 10,000 others with disabled breadwinners. These vulnerable categories received regular two-monthly rations consisting of wheat flour, rice, beans, ghee and soap. An ICRC nutritionist conducted nutritional surveys in Red Crescent clinics and investigated the price and availability of food on the market so as to identify the city’s most vulnerable groups in this respect.

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* FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
** WFP: World Food Programme

5 The average Afghan family numbers six.
In view of the growing destitution of the capital's inhabitants and the absence of most humanitarian players from the scene, the ICRC carried out a limited winter distribution of blankets, clothes, plastic sheeting and fuel to families headed by widows or handicapped breadwinners, street children and orphans.

People displaced by the conflict could often take with them only the barest essentials for survival. Whenever possible, the ICRC took immediate steps to provide them with food, safe drinking water, medical care and adequate sanitary facilities. In 1997 the ICRC set up a camp on the outskirts of Herat for some 5,000 displaced people from Badghis province. To encourage these families to return to their homes, the ICRC launched a community-based assistance programme around Bala-Murghab, the region from which most of them had fled. Projects included the digging of wells, cleaning irrigation canals, distributing locally manufactured tools, handing out vegetable seeds and running a poultry project for households headed by women.

The toll taken by the war and the poor state of the medical infrastructure debilitated by 19 years of conflict again made health care a priority for the ICRC in 1998. The delegation continued its support for 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. The ICRC supplied these facilities with surgical material and medicines and covered the cost of maintenance, fuel and staff allowances. Basic rehabilitation work, such as repairs to windows, pipes and water pumps, was carried out on hospitals in Gurbahar, Kabul, Maimana, Mazar-i-Sharif, Pul-i-Khumri and Shibarghan. A dozen other health facilities, including the military hospitals in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif which treated the countless war-wounded in or near conflict zones, also received assistance. The ICRC endeavoured to ensure that all segments of the population had access to health care, especially women in Taliban-controlled areas. Delegates regularly visited health facilities near the front lines and provided first-aid material and training for locally run ambulance services and health centres.

The delivery of supplies to hospitals in the Shamali plain and the Panjshir valley was hampered by the closure of access roads owing to the fighting. These medical facilities received provisions from ICRC stocks in the region until these were exhausted. The delegation then negotiated cross-line flights to Baghram airport from where the medical material and medicines were transported to hospitals treating the war-wounded.

The four ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centres in Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif kept up the production and fitting of artificial limbs for mine victims and other patients, including children affected by poliomyelitis. Following the withdrawal of several other organizations active in this domain, there was a slight increase in the demand for prosthetic/orthotic appliances. The building of an extension to the women's ward in Herat enabled the rehabilitation centre to treat care for the war-wounded

AFGHAN CONFLICT
Total expenditure in 1998:
Sfr 53,042,080

- Protection/tracing: 43.0%
- Relief: 26.6%
- Health activities: 14.6%
- Cooperation with the National Society: 5.3%
- Promotion/dissemination: 6.1%
- Operational support: 1.2%
- Overheads: 3.2%
patients with spinal cord injuries

more female patients. Construction work had to be done on the Mazar-i-Sharif centre following the Taliban takeover so that it could again admit women amputees. Some 62% of the 214 Afghan staff in the ICRC centres are themselves disabled and 26 employees are women.

To measure the extent of the landmine problem in Afghanistan and to help prevent further loss of life and limb, the ICRC collated data relating to mine incidents gathered from the five ICRC-supported hospitals and the medical facility in Pul-i-Khumri. This work was extended to include additional health structures in Kabul, Badghis province, the Shamali plain and the Panjshir valley. The ICRC shared its findings with the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan.6

The collapse of the health system had made it increasingly difficult for paraplegics to obtain adequate care, and during the year ICRC health delegates monitored the situation of such patients in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad. The entirely ICRC-supported Karte Seh Hospital in the capital remained the major referral centre, receiving paraplegic patients from distant provinces. In a bid to improve service and reduce hospitalization and readmissions, a home-care service was offered to some 145 patients.

For those Kabulis who managed to escape the effects of shelling, poverty and hunger, water-borne diseases remained a deadly threat, particularly for the young and the elderly. In 1997 the ICRC launched an environmental project to improve and upgrade latrines, to build one well per 60 families, to organize the collection of night soil and to provide house-to-house health education. This programme proved most successful and was extended to cover four districts in 1998. Authorities at the neighbourhood and municipal level were encouraged to assume more responsibility by informing the general public about the proper use of latrines and by financing and organizing the maintenance of wells.

To improve the often poor sanitary conditions in places of detention, essential water and sanitation work was carried out, including the construction of latrines, repairs to hand pumps and the evacuation of refuse.

The ICRC’s activities in Afghanistan could not have been carried out without the support of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, whose staff were closely involved in the ICRC’s relief distributions to the most vulnerable. After the earthquakes which shook the north-east in February and May, it was the Afghan Red Crescent that was first on the spot to render vital medical and other assistance. National Society volunteers and staff also responded rapidly to the rocket attacks on Kabul in September and December, taking the wounded to hospital and collecting the dead.

The Afghan Red Crescent, with the ICRC’s financial and technical support, carried out its own monthly distributions of food rations for needy people in

6 This unit depends directly on the United Nations Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 9,075 detainees (5,273 for the first time) in 52 places of detention run by the Taliban and the northern coalition and distributed essential items such as blankets, clothes, soap and insulation material; during these visits the ICRC collected 13,376 Red Cross messages from detainees and distributed 4,799 in places of detention;
- assisted 2,857 detainees after their release by financing and organizing their return home;
- provided 54.8 tonnes of food and non-food relief to detainees;
- carried out water and sanitation work, including the construction of latrines, repairs to hand pumps and the evacuation of refuse, in 5 places of detention;
- forwarded 10,679 family messages from civilians and distributed 11,706 to civilians;
- reunited 84 members of dispersed families with their relatives;
- distributed 15,434 tonnes of food and 1,445 tonnes of other relief to a total of 29,000 particularly vulnerable Afghan families, some 25,000 of them in Kabul;
- distributed 758 tonnes of food and 950 tonnes of other relief to some 145,000 earthquake victims;
- organized the clearing and repair of 656 km of irrigation channels, thus allowing irrigation for 94,000 hectares of previously parched land and providing 818 tonnes of flour to families taking part in the food-for-work scheme;
- distributed vegetable seeds, seedlings and 36,000 locally produced agricultural implements to 15,000 families in 17 provinces;
- distributed 145.2 tonnes of seed;
- assisted a total of 16,200 farming families through its agricultural programme;
- fully supported 5 Afghan hospitals, which admitted a total of 23,885 people (3,861 of whom were suffering from war-related injuries) and provided ad hoc support to more than a dozen other hospitals around the country;
- manufactured 4,235 prostheses and 3,986 orthoses, and fitted 4,333 newly disabled people with such appliances, in 4 rehabilitation centres;
- constructed 13,500 latrines in Kabul;
- sunk 75 wells;
- conducted house-to-house health education in 4 districts of Kabul;
- organized 284 dissemination events attended by over 10,000 people (students and teachers, the authorities, ICRC and ARCS staff as well as the military and other bearers of weapons);
- produced and broadcast a mini-drama in both Dari and Pashtu on the ICRC's activities, the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian law in Ghazni, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul and Kandahar;
- contributed to the BBC's educational radio drama New home, new life;
- jointly with the Afghan Red Crescent, continued to collate information on the location of anti-personnel mines, mine incidents and the treatment received by mine victims, and to raise mine awareness among the population, particularly farmers, women and children.
- provided a wide range of support to the headquarters, 4 regional offices and 26 provincial branches of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, for example by carrying out joint relief programmes, training staff in tracing and dissemination techniques and supporting Red Crescent clinics, 5 marastoons and social rehabilitation programmes;
Kabul, Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar, and provided ad hoc assistance where needed. It also implemented food-for-work schemes, ranging from canal cleaning and refuse collection to the rehabilitation of a clinic and repairs to a dam. When the ICRC handed over the distribution of Red Cross messages in Kabul to the National Society, the latter was responsible for the distribution of family messages throughout the country. Its staff also supervised agricultural projects, located potential beneficiaries of the ICRC’s limb-fitting programme and spread knowledge of humanitarian law.

Within the context of its most important cooperation programme in Asia, the ICRC helped to consolidate the structure and activities of the Afghan Red Crescent still further. Financial assistance was given to the vehicle workshop it was running. This was previously a project delegated to the British Red Cross, but in May full responsibility was handed over to the Afghan National Society. The delegation also continued to provide support to five marastoons’ administered by the Afghan Red Crescent and catering for 445 destitute families. In addition, the ICRC gave financial assistance to Red Crescent mine-awareness teams.

To strengthen the National Society’s management capacity and increase knowledge about the Movement, seminars on dissemination and restoring family links were given to its managerial staff and employees. Moreover, the ICRC and the Federation gave financial support to all Red Crescent branches and to the headquarters, covering its running costs and providing staff allowances.

In an attempt to prevent future violations of humanitarian law and to pursue a proactive approach rather than a purely reactive one, the promotion of compliance with and respect for humanitarian law remained primordial. In Taliban-controlled areas, in addition to on-the-spot dissemination, the ICRC produced and broadcast a twice-weekly eight-minute radio drama serial entitled Help. The programme, which was transmitted in Dari and Pashtu by Radio Sharyat in several Taliban-controlled towns, aimed to present, in an original way, the ICRC’s activities, the Fundamental Principles of the Movement and the basic tenets of humanitarian law. The ICRC also contributed to the BBC’s* educational radio serial New home, new life.

Dissemination of humanitarian law in the north, which included sessions held at checkpoints on major roads, was restricted by the volatile security situation.

National staff of the ICRC and the Federation received training to increase their knowledge of the Movement and to give them practical dissemination tools for their daily contacts. In addition, two workshops for field dissemination officers from Afghanistan were held in Peshawar, Pakistan, with a view to fine-tuning dissemination strategy, developing team spirit and sharing experiences.

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

* BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
The coalition government faced political and financial challenges in 1998 which further weakened the country’s economic situation and created a breeding ground for social and political unrest. The nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan prompted the international community to impose economic sanctions on the country, thereby bringing it closer to the brink of bankruptcy.

Tensions flared in Karachi when the Mutahida Qaummi Movement walked out of the provincial government. The ICRC closely monitored protection issues in the city, where a state of emergency was declared and the provincial government was suspended in November. Elsewhere sectarian violence was on the increase and relations between Pakistan and Iran deteriorated further over developments in Afghanistan. In May and August shelling along the line of control dividing Kashmir forced thousands to flee their homes. Tens of thousands of displaced people from the Pakistan side took refuge in five camps in the interior. The ICRC provided many uprooted families with non-food assistance. Sanitary facilities were built in cooperation with the local authorities with a view to preventing the spread of disease in the camps, where the displaced will remain until the end of winter.

As in the past, the delegation in Pakistan was particularly active in supporting ICRC programmes in Afghanistan. The sub-delegation in Peshawar was the logistic pivot for operations in Afghanistan and for the arrival and departure of all expatriate staff and visitors. Two ICRC-chartered aircraft served the main destinations in Afghanistan, delivering relief and medical supplies and providing NGOs with the only means of transport, especially for security or medical evacuations. Medical and relief supplies were channelled through Peshawar, where the ICRC maintained a warehouse. The Peshawar office was actively involved in supplying assistance to the quake-hit area in the north-east of Afghanistan in February and May. The central medical purchasing unit in Peshawar procured all the medicines and medical material required for ICRC-assisted health facilities in Afghanistan.

The ICRC continued to support certain medical activities conducted by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society in Karachi and in the north along the line of control. At the request of the embassy of Kazakhstan, the ICRC, the National Society and the International Organization for Migration organized the transfer of 231 ethnic Kazakhs from Quetta to Islamabad; they were subsequently flown to Kazakhstan as part of a repatriation programme involving five countries. Together with the Federation, the ICRC backed the Pakistan Red Crescent’s efforts to bring assistance to the victims of the floods in Makran in April.

The delegation continued to spread knowledge of humanitarian law within the country’s armed forces, universities and Red Crescent Society. As part of its three-year dissemination programme launched in 1998, eight retired senior officers
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- collected 879 Red Cross messages and distributed 2,464 family messages between civilians and issued ICRC travel documents for 705 beneficiaries;
- continued to use the sub-delegation in Peshawar as the logistic pivot for relief and medical operations in Afghanistan;
- provided some 610 displaced families (some 3,820 beneficiaries) in the Jhelum and Neelum valleys with blankets and jerrycans;
- procured all medicines and medical supplies for ICRC-assisted health facilities in Afghanistan through its central medical purchasing unit in Peshawar;
- continued to support the mobile eye clinic run by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society in the northern territories and along the line of control;
- financed 2 Red Crescent ambulances in Karachi and helped to ensure their efficient use in areas affected by tensions;
- conducted lectures on the law of armed conflict at the four main military training institutions in Pakistan for some 750 officers ranging in rank from captain to lieutenant-colonel;
- gave a lecture to the International Relations Department of Peshawar University;
- organized a training workshop in Islamabad for 11 professors of law and international relations and provided the 11 faculties represented with reference material on humanitarian law.
appointed to assist the ICRC as lecturers received five days of intensive training in humanitarian law. For the first time, lectures on the law of armed conflict were given at the four main military training institutions in Pakistan and at the country's Air Force War College. The ultimate goal is to introduce humanitarian law as a permanent subject in Pakistan's military instruction programmes.

Similarly, lectures were given to students and professors of law and international relations at Peshawar and Islamabad universities with a view to eventually including humanitarian law in the courses taught at Pakistan's law faculties. A Pakistani legal adviser carried out a review of the existing provisions of humanitarian law in the country's legislation and set up a national committee on implementation.

In cooperation with the National Society, the ICRC sponsored and conducted a three-day seminar for Red Crescent dissemination officers to "train the trainers" on humanitarian law, the Movement and the Fundamental Principles.
In 1998 Sri Lanka was once again in the grip of violence, which caused the death of countless LTTE* combatants and government soldiers and further threatened the island's political and economic stability. Although relatively few civilians were directly affected by the battles raging in the north and the various skirmishes in the east, thousands found themselves caught up in a spiral of impoverishment, aggravated by lack of food security and restricted access to clean water and medical facilities.

Government forces clashed with Tamil Tigers in a bid to capture the access road to the Jaffna peninsula. Fighting was fierce throughout the year, particularly in and around Elephant Pass, Paranthan, Kilinochchi and Mankulam. In September the LTTE launched an offensive on Kilinochchi and succeeded in recapturing the town. However, the cost in human lives was among the highest in a single battle since the beginning of the war. The army reciprocated by taking Mankulam. Soldiers took over the small town of Oddussuddan, forcing more than 12,000 civilians to seek shelter further north, mainly in Puthukkudiyiruppu. The ICRC provided the newly displaced with emergency non-food supplies. Demand for the Red Cross message service increased sharply as people tried to re-establish contact with their relatives after having been separated as a result of the fighting.

Although both sides took steps to spare the civilian population whenever possible, a significant feature of this "no-mercy war" was the near absence of prisoners taken on the battlefield. The delegation repeatedly reminded the belligerents of the obligation to comply with the basic tenets of international humanitarian law governing the conduct of hostilities, and in particular of their duty to spare prisoners, the wounded and civilians.

*S LITE: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
The conflict was not restricted to the north. The Sri Lankan capital and the Buddhist shrine of the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy were ravaged by bomb blasts. Civilians were also affected by low-intensity warfare in the east, particularly in the Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts where intercommunal violence was rife. In June the army regained control of the coastal stretch between Valachchenai and Vakarai, in the Batticaloa region.

Of the hundreds of thousands of people living in the Vanni – the region between Vavuniya and the Jaffna peninsula – three-quarters were displaced persons who had fled previous fighting in the north. Their plight was exacerbated by severe restrictions imposed on this LTTE-held area. Although the government provided the displaced with food and other essential items, both the resident and the displaced population was in dire need of non-food supplies, medical assistance and access to fully functioning water and sanitation systems.

The ICRC focused its assistance programmes on the most vulnerable people in the Vanni. The delegation supplied school uniforms for the children of widows with little or no income. The material was purchased in Colombo and the tailoring carried out in the Vanni. In cooperation with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, the ICRC implemented a food-for-work programme which employed men to rethatch roofs.

Ten mobile health clinics, run entirely by the ICRC or in cooperation with the National Society, provided medical care in the north and east. The main ailments treated were malaria, respiratory tract infections and skin diseases. During the course of the year the Canadian Red Cross took over six health teams run jointly by the ICRC and the Sri Lanka Red Cross as a delegated project.

The ICRC continued to support 27 primary health care centres in the Vanni and Mannar areas, which provided basic health care and health education for both the resident and the displaced population. This programme was also part of the project delegated to the Canadian Red Cross.

To combat the spread of water-borne disease, the ICRC kept up its water and sanitation projects in the Vanni. This included the construction and rehabilitation of wells, in particular work on the well of Mallavi Hospital, the only medical facility performing surgery in the region. The main problem encountered by the ICRC remained obtaining the authorities’ permission to bring vital spare parts and equipment into the Vanni to install and repair wells.

In Jaffna the ICRC provided medical supplies to the Red Cross health team which was offering health care in the transit camp for returnees from the Vanni. Following the capture of Kilinochchi and the shooting down of a civilian aircraft just off the coast, the peninsula was virtually cut off from the rest of the country. The ICRC’s weekly shuttle service between Trincomalee and Jaffna was increasingly in demand, as there was no other safe means for civilians to cross to the mainland. The ICRC-chartered vessel, the only independent link between the two
regions, continued to transport patients with their relatives, personnel for essential services and ICRC, NGO and UN staff. In addition, the ship delivered supplies provided by the ICRC and other organizations active on the peninsula, medical items furnished by the government, and mail for the whole peninsula.

In the Eastern Province, a midwife from the Ministry of Health regularly joined the ICRC’s mobile health team to offer antenatal consultations and vaccinations for pregnant women and children in potentially dangerous areas. A water and sanitation project in Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts was delegated to the Austrian Red Cross.

Work on the National Irrigation Rehabilitation Project, funded by the World Bank, was pursued with the active participation of the population concerned. The delegation acted as a neutral intermediary between the World Bank, the Irrigation Ministry, the Farmers’ Association, irrigation workers and the LTTE and continued to monitor the sites on behalf of the World Bank.

ICRC delegates continued to visit detainees held by the warring parties in connection with the protracted conflict in Sri Lanka. The number of detainees in the centre and south of the country rose as a result of round-ups conducted after various bomb attacks. Written and oral representations were regularly made to the authorities concerned, reminding them of their obligation to guarantee the physical and moral integrity and to respect the dignity of all persons arrested, under interrogation and held in detention.

Once again, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary by supervising the release of a few detainees held by the LTTE and by handing over the mortal remains of soldiers and LTTE combatants to the authorities concerned in the north and east.

The promotion of humanitarian law was a priority in 1998, with delegates stepping up their efforts to spread knowledge of this body of law among officers of the different operational divisions of the armed forces. Ad hoc dissemination sessions were held at checkpoints and presentations were organized in conflict zones for soldiers, officers and members of Tamil paramilitary groups. The delegation also conducted programmes for other target groups, such as local and regional administrators, teachers and students. With a view to having measures to implement international humanitarian law incorporated in national legislation, the ICRC worked with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assemble a number of key ministries for an information seminar on the setting-up of a national committee on humanitarian law.

A newsletter on ICRC activities published every two months in both Singhalese and Tamil was distributed to a wide range of decision-makers in politics, the media, the civil service, academic circles and the security forces.

Cooperation between the Sri Lanka Red Cross and the ICRC continued in key areas at national, local and operational levels. The delegation supported the
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 3,133 detainees (2,318 for the first time) in 168 government-run places of detention, including 58 persons held in connection with the 1987-1990 uprising by the Janatha Vimukti Peramuna party, the Singhalese opposition;
- visited 70 detainees held by the LTTE;
- supervised the release under its auspices of 49 detainees;
- transported the mortal remains of 1,014 soldiers and LTTE combatants;
- collected 2,280 Red Cross messages from detainees and delivered 2,432 such messages to detainees;
- issued 393 detention certificates;
- organized family reunification for 20 isolated persons, mostly by escorting them out of conflict zones to areas where relatives were living;
- opened 1,158 tracing files;
- resolved 792 cases;
- collected 2,497 Red Cross messages and delivered 5,455 such messages between individual civilians and their families;
- distributed plastic sheeting, soap, cooking utensils, bedding, clothing and other relief items to 4,190 particularly vulnerable families in the Vanni;
- produced 10,600 school kits for the offspring of widows with little or no income living in the Vanni;
- shipped to the north medical supplies provided by the government and logistic equipment for various NGOs;
- transported 630 people requiring specialized medical treatment from the Jaffna peninsula to the south;
- furnished the medical supplies needed to run 10 mobile health teams and 27 primary health-care centres treating some 30,000 patients a month in the Vanni and the Eastern Province;
- provided pipes, pumps, chemicals and other materials for 75 water-supply systems and sanitation projects, whether for new wells or carrying out repairs on existing systems, mainly in the Vanni and in the Eastern Province;
- provided services to civilians affected by the ongoing conflict by giving financial support to the Batticaloa branch of the Sri Lanka Red Cross, which distributed assistance to hospital patients;
- provided support for the Batticaloa and Vavuniya branches, which evacuated seriously ill or war-wounded civilians;
- assisted the Trincomalee branch's mobile dental clinic;
- provided medical services for returnees at Gurunagar camp in cooperation with the Jaffna Red Cross branch;
- implemented a training programme for National Society medical personnel and volunteers in cooperation with the Canadian Red Cross;
- held dissemination sessions in the field for 6,372 members of the armed and security forces, 2,074 government soldiers, 4,833 members of the general public, the media and schools, 30 LTTE combatants and more than 500 members of Tamil paramilitary groups.
National Society's efforts aimed at having a draft law (the Red Cross Act) adopted, which would give it official status through the 1980-1981 Sri Lanka Social Services Act. Operational support was also provided at the national level for the restoration of family links and dissemination projects.

As the Federation re-established its presence in Sri Lanka in 1998, discussions between the members of the Movement focused on the possible handover of key elements of the ICRC's initiatives in the area of institutional development.
NEW DELHI

Regional delegation
(Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal)

In early 1998 the coalition of 18 parties led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in India. Almost half of the seats in the Lok Sabha (House of Representatives) were allocated to parties with essentially local or regional support bases. This was a further reflection of the country’s cultural, political and religious diversity, which is a source of tension in many Indian states. Owing to the country’s huge domestic market, the Asian economic crisis had little impact on India. However, the nuclear tests carried out by both India and Pakistan heightened tension between the two neighbours and led to the imposition of sanctions by the international community. Military operations intensified along the line of control dividing Kashmir, claiming scores of civilian and military lives and causing local inhabitants to temporarily flee the conflict zone. Sporadic armed clashes continued in the north-east, in areas such as Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, despite efforts to find a peaceful settlement. The ICRC kept a close eye on the situation and remained ready to offer its services.

Delegates pursued their visits to people arrested in connection with the situation prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir. Detention teams visited detainees held in police lock-ups, sub-jails and jails in this state and elsewhere in the country. They checked the detainees’ material and psychological conditions of detention and offered them the possibility to exchange Red Cross messages with their families. Following the visits the ICRC’s findings and recommendations were reported to the authorities concerned. Specific issues were taken up with the higher authorities in Jammu and Kashmir and with the Home Ministry in New Delhi. Furthermore, a round-table discussion on compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out the criteria for ICRC visits to persons detained in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, was held in New Delhi in October. This meeting gave the ICRC an opportunity to discuss in detail certain aspects of its procedures relating to detention work and to review the prevailing situation in prisons and other detention centres with officials of the Union government and of Jammu and Kashmir state.

The ICRC took steps to help the Indian Red Cross Society train its staff to work in potentially violent contexts. The National Society has some 8.5 million volunteers countrywide. During disaster-preparedness workshops held in states experiencing communal tension, the delegation introduced a dissemination component designed to promote respect for the National Society and basic humanitarian rules. Discussions also focused on operations to be undertaken by Red Cross...
branches in times of internal strife. In December delegates carried out a survey, together with the Assam branch, to identify potential areas for cooperation in dissemination and first-aid activities in this north-eastern state.

The delegation established contact with key academics with a view to including courses on humanitarian law in universities, encouraging research and training teachers.

ICRC delegates held dissemination sessions for all ranks of the Indian armed and security forces. In July the ICRC carried out a two-day training programme at the Indian naval base in Goa. This was the first time an Indian naval training establishment had been briefed on the principles governing war at sea.

In Bangladesh, the peace accord signed in December 1997 between the government and the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity allowed for the return of the remaining Chakma, Marma and Tripura tribals from India to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The situation in the region remained calm and the returnees were able to settle without too much hardship. Together with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, the ICRC set up a dissemination campaign in the Hill Tracts.

The eleventh and twelfth rounds of ICRC visits to detainees in Bhutan were carried out in March and September respectively in accordance with standard ICRC procedures. Messages collected during a mission to the Jhapa district of eastern Nepal, where a number of Nepali-speaking Bhutanese refugees are living in seven camps, were distributed to their relatives detained in Bhutan and new messages were collected from the detainees. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Bhutanese government, setting out the terms and conditions for prison visits, was renewed in September for another five years.

The Maoist insurgency in Nepal affected about 15 of the country's 75 districts. In December the ICRC began visiting security detainees arrested in connection with the internal disturbances. Delegates registered detainees held in three jails in the Himalayan foothills, in one of the poorest regions of Nepal where road conditions are difficult and telecommunications almost non-existent. Following the authorization received in 1998, the ICRC will visit an additional 20 to 30 places of detention during the coming months.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in India, visited 1,746 detainees (752 for the first time) being held in 27 places of detention in connection with the situation in Jammu and Kashmir; during these visits the delegates collected 344 Red Cross messages addressed to family members and distributed 88 to detainees;
- held a medical seminar with 22 senior officials of the prison authorities in Jammu on humanitarian law and the ICRC’s detention activities in the Jammu and Kashmir region;
- brought together some 30 prison service officials and doctors working in detention centres in Jammu for a seminar focusing on health and medical ethics in relation to persons arrested and detained and the effects of violence on the civilian population;
- in Bhutan, visited 188 detainees held in 2 places of detention; during the visits delegates collected 333 family messages addressed to relatives and distributed 70 to detainees;
- in Nepal, registered 99 detainees held in 3 places of detention;
- issued ICRC travel documents for 706 beneficiaries;
- pursued its "train-the-trainers" programme with 1-day dissemination courses for staff of the Indian Red Cross;
- held 8 emergency preparedness workshops for over 250 senior staff members of the 31 state and Union Territory branches of the Indian Red Cross;
- organized 3 tracing workshops for 70 representatives of the Indian Red Cross in 17 of the 31 state and Union Territories;
- organized 3 training workshops on tracing and dissemination with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society;
- held, with the Nepal Red Cross Society, a 2-day national training course on dissemination;
- organized events to promote knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law for over 900 officers of the Border Security Force, the Indian Air Force, the Indian-Tibetan Police, the Navy and Coastguards, the military police, the Central Reserve Police Force, the Central Bureau of investigation, the New Delhi police and the Andhra and Madhya Pradesh police forces;
- organized a meeting of experts, together with the Association of Indian Universities, to prepare a model syllabus in which humanitarian law features as part of a broader programme on human rights and international law, and held dissemination sessions for professors of law from different parts of India;
- conducted dissemination sessions at the Bangladesh Naval Academy (Chittagong), the air force bases in Chittagong and Dhaka, the Defence Services Command and Staff College, and the Command and Staff Training Institute;
- organized jointly with the Bangladesh Red Crescent a symposium on the protection of the emblem as a follow-up to the regional seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law and cultural heritage law held in Kathmandu in 1997;
- held, together with the Bangladesh Red Crescent, a 1-day symposium entitled "Challenges of Humanitarian Reporting" for journalists based in Dhaka;
- organized a course at the Royal Nepalese Army Staff College for 68 officers of the Nepalese army;
- gave talks to 795 Nepalese officers and men at the Royal Nepalese Army Headquarters;
- took part in the Second National Conference on banning anti-personnel landmines, held in the Indian state of Manipur in March;
- organized, together with the Indian Centre for Humanitarian Law and Research, a national panel discussion on anti-personnel landmines in Hyderabad.
In 1998 Cambodia oscillated between unstable peace, internal unrest and armed conflict sparked by factional disputes. Although little occurred on the military front, the forces loyal to Prince Ranariddh opposed those of Hun Sen in O'Smach and Samlot. However, both sides remained entrenched in their positions. The Kingdom did see sweeping political changes with the Khmer Rouge on the verge of collapse and the first post-UNTAC* elections.

In March the former First Prime Minister, who had been forcibly ousted from power in July 1997, was tried and sentenced but subsequently granted a royal amnesty. The defection of a high-ranking Khmer Rouge commander based in Anlong Veng led to the final takeover of this Khmer Rouge stronghold by defectors backed by government forces. These military operations caused thousands of civilians to flee to Thailand’s Si Sa Ket province, where a refugee camp was set up. Others fled southwards to Siem Reap province, where the Cambodian Red Cross and the WFP took care of their material needs. In mid-April images of the deceased Pol Pot were beamed around the world. More Khmer Rouge leaders switched sides under the umbrella of Ieng Sary in Pailin and thousands of the movement’s former fighters were welcomed by the government in an integration ceremony held in Anlong Veng.

In July some 94% of Cambodia’s registered voters, including for the first time electors in Pailin, returned three main parties to power: the Cambodian People’s Party, FUNCINPEC* and the Sam Rangsi Party. Opposition dissent regarding the

Khmer Rouge defections

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* UNTAC: United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
* FUNCINPEC: United National Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia
legality of the poll led to street protests, demonstrations and the setting-up of a "democracy camp" outside the National Assembly building. In September the capital saw a rapid escalation of violence between protesters and various branches of the police. The delegation made back-up ambulance services available to supplement those run by the French Red Cross from Calmette Hospital. In view of the clashes, the ICRC also distributed assistance to medical facilities and increased its detention-related activities.

By year's end an agreement had been reached whereby Hun Sen became the sole Prime Minister and Prince Ranariddh the Chairman of the National Assembly, and discussions were being held regarding the membership of the Senate. In December the last Khmer Rouge diehards "surrendered" to the government in Pailin. Although the way now seemed clear for a final end to hostilities in Cambodia, many problems remained unresolved.

Civilians in Cambodia were exposed not only to the direct and indirect consequences of the long drawn-out conflict but also to banditry, abductions and the effects of widespread corruption. To see that the civilian population was being treated in accordance with the rules laid down in international humanitarian law, the ICRC carried out regular field trips to villages in troubled areas. Delegates were able to make their first trip to the Samrong area in western Siem Reap province since 1995, when the ICRC withdrew from the area, to resume dissemination and tracing work and to locate amputees requiring artificial limbs.

The ICRC continued its regular visits to all 25 prisons in the Kingdom. Following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding in March, the ICRC also visited Gendarmerie royale police stations, military camps and detention centres in Phnom Malai. Delegates checked on the material and psychological conditions of detention, informed the relevant authorities of their findings and distributed material assistance. All detainees were given the opportunity to restore or maintain family links through the Red Cross message service.

As the normal postal system in Cambodia was not yet up and running, family messages were exchanged not only between detainees and their relatives but also between civilians within and outside Cambodia. The processing of requests to locate missing relatives was often successful, sometimes after a separation of more than ten years. This work was conducted in cooperation with the Cambodian Red Cross.

In the wake of armed clashes in the north, the ICRC provided the military hospitals in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Siem Ream provinces with material assistance. The ICRC also supplied other health facilities treating the war-wounded, including civilians caught in crossfire and people of Vietnamese origin who had fallen victim to ethnically-motivated attacks. During the three-day riots in Phnom Penh, the ICRC had three ambulances on standby to evacuate the wounded, and trained personnel were available round the clock to respond to
emergencies. Assistance in the form of dispensary and dressing sets was given to local NGOs treating the injured. The ICRC also visited some hospitals to identify patients for tracing purposes.

Sadly Cambodia is often one of the examples used to illustrate the scourge of anti-personnel mines, the toll they take in human lives and the damage they cause to the fabric of society. Of the 28,000 amputees in the country, some 95% are victims of landmines. The ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic centres in Battambang and Phnom Penh continued to produce artificial limbs and to fit and rehabilitate amputees, many of them from the newly accessible areas in the north-west. The workshop in the Cambodian capital, opened in 1991, also manufactured components that were supplied to various NGOs engaged in prosthetics. On Mine Awareness Day, an annual event in Cambodia since 1995, a five-minute radio spot produced by the ICRC on the Ottawa treaty9 and mine awareness was broadcast on one national and four local radio stations. The ICRC took an active part in other events, including the 1998 Angkor Wat Half-Marathon aimed at raising awareness of the mines issue and generating funds for mine victims.

The ICRC worked closely with the Cambodian Red Cross in projects ranging from locating potential beneficiaries of the programme for the war-disabled to restoring family links and promoting humanitarian law among various target groups, such as the National Society itself, teachers, the police and military officers. The ICRC-sponsored lectures on humanitarian law for fourth-year law students continued, but were reduced during the second semester owing to difficulties at the Phnom Penh University.

The delegation implemented a two-pronged dissemination strategy to strengthen cooperation with the RCAF* training directorate and to support the RCAF's own efforts to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among its troops. ICRC-trained instructors gave presentations to army officers and men, the ICRC dissemination officer's contribution being limited to presenting the ICRC's mandate and activities and monitoring the sessions. For the first time, sessions were held in Pailin and in the north-eastern province of Ratanakiri.

In order to help the National Society spread knowledge of the Red Cross principles, dissemination sessions were jointly organized by the ICRC and the Cambodian Red Cross in various provinces, including the Special Municipality of Pailin. These sessions targeted the civilian authorities, police and military officers, government employees, teachers and Red Cross staff.

9 See pp. 319-321.

* RCAF: Royal Cambodian Armed Forces
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 107 detainees held in 46 places of detention and provided them with material aid as needed consisting of soap, washing powder, toothbrushes and toothpaste, as well as khrasmas (traditional Khmer cloth), mats, mosquito nets, blankets and some recreational items;
- carried out water and sanitation rehabilitation work in 17 detention centres;
- collected 5,605 family messages from detainees for their relatives and distributed 4,763 in places of detention;
- opened 336 tracing files, resolved 130 cases;
- collected 10,088 Red Cross messages from the civilian population and distributed 10,138;
- took measures, in cooperation with the Cambodian Red Cross, to recruit blood donors until the National Society's withdrawal from the project;
- distributed medical assistance in the form of basic dressings, infusions and analgesics to 3 health facilities treating the war-wounded;

- fitted 1,032 amputees with prostheses, 954 of whom were mine victims;
- fitted 89 people with orthoses;
- manufactured 1,521 knee joints, 8,048 alignment devices and 1,610 orthotic sidebars for other organizations;
- opened 336 tracing files, resolved 130 cases;
- collected 10,088 Red Cross messages from the civilian population and distributed 10,138;
- took an active part in Mine Awareness Day (24 February);
- produced a radio spot, placed newspaper advertisements on the campaign for a total ban on anti-personnel mines and sponsored the production of banners displayed throughout the country.

- organized, in cooperation with the Cambodian Red Cross, a seminar on dissemination and capacity-building for 31 Red Cross officers and branch directors from 10 provinces;
- conducted joint dissemination sessions in the provinces of Battambang, Pursat, Siem Reap, Kompong Thom, Kompong Speu, Banteay Meanchey, Prey Veng, Phnom Penh and the Special Municipality of Pailin;
- organized 148 dissemination presentations attended by 4,241 members of the armed forces and 2,180 government officials, civilians and Red Cross members;
BANGKOK

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

The main thrust of the regional delegation's activities in 1998 remained the promotion of international humanitarian law among key groups, efforts to secure the ratification of humanitarian treaties and the incorporation of the law of armed conflict in national military training. Cooperation between the ICRC and the National Societies in the region focused on dissemination and restoring family links. High-level meetings were held with the Chinese and Thai military authorities with a view to intensifying dissemination activities.

In the first quarter of the year a delegate was temporarily stationed in Thailand to assess the humanitarian needs of the estimated 70,000 Khmer refugees living in four camps along the Thai-Cambodian border. Thanks to the ICRC's tracing and mailing services, many refugees received reassuring news of relatives who had returned to Cambodia and also decided to go back to their homeland. For some this was the first opportunity to contact their families in Cambodia in over ten years. By the end of the year some 30,000 refugees had returned to their places of origin. In addition, the regional delegation provided medical assistance to Thai hospitals treating Khmer war-wounded.

The regional delegation monitored the situation of the approximately 100,000 refugees from Myanmar living in camps along the Thai-Myanmar border by maintaining contact with the Thai authorities, UNHCR and NGOs operating in the area.

In response to the recent rapid development of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) – the National Society now counts 47 regional sections and is present in all 2,562 districts with some 23 million members – the ICRC concentrated its efforts on joint ICRC/RCSC projects. These included spreading knowledge of humanitarian law by means of a three-year "train-the-trainers" programme launched in 1998 and preparation of a training manual, the promotion of the Fundamental Principles within the National Society and the restoration of family links within and outside the People's Republic of China.

The first phase of the "train-the-trainers" programme involved the organization, in cooperation with the RCSC, of the first national training workshop for 80 RCSC managerial staff from 29 Chinese provinces, municipalities and regions and from Macao. This six-day event was held in Leshan (Sichuan province) in
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- collected 1,003 Red Cross messages from Khmer refugees in Thailand for forwarding to their relatives in Cambodia and distributed 780 messages received from Cambodia;

- manufactured, at its prosthetic/orthotic centre in Ho Chi Minh City, 1,929 artificial limbs (including 432 for destitute amputees);

- held the first "train-the-trainers" session with the youth department of the Thai Red Cross Society in April, followed by a 3-day workshop;

- took part in a RCSC youth camp which brought together 120 Red Cross members from Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Hong Kong and Macao;

- participated in a HELP (Health Emergencies in Large Populations) course organized jointly with the Hong Kong Red Cross branch;

- took part in a training course organized by the Japanese Red Cross Society for 35 members of local branches and teachers in nursing colleges and another held to prepare 24 staff from the National Society for international assignments;

- conducted a dissemination workshop, in cooperation with the Federation, on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law for 30 leaders of the Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea;

- took part, together with a Federation resource person, in a basic training course held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, for National Society delegates to be deployed abroad;

- in conjunction with UNHCR, organized a workshop on humanitarian law and refugee law in the Thai capital for 30 participants from government departments and NGOs;

- carried out a 1-day presentation on humanitarian law for 306 senior officers and cadets from three Thai naval academies;

- gave a presentation on the ICRC's mandate and activities at a seminar on peace-keeping operations organized jointly by the Australian Defence Force and the Royal Thai Armed Forces, and briefed a group of Thai police officers before they joined the UN peace-keeping operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina;

- published a document entitled International Rules of Warfare and Command Responsibility, which was based on the proceedings of the regional seminar on humanitarian law held in Bangkok in November 1997 for representatives from 15 countries; some 1,200 copies were distributed to Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, universities, military academies and the various institutes of strategic studies and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region;

- organized, together with the Macao Red Cross branch, a seminar for 18 dissemination officers from 14 countries in the region;

- organized a workshop for 18 Mongolian instructors in the law of armed conflict and translated teaching aids into the national language;

- sponsored the participation of members of the Chinese People's Liberation Army in the 72nd International Military Course on the Law of Armed Conflict held in San Remo, Italy.

- held workshops, in cooperation with the Lao Red Cross, on the Red Cross and humanitarian law for students at the National Institute for Administration and Management and the Vientiane University Faculty of Law;
workshops in Mongolia

programme for the war-disabled

December and focused on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law. The participants were then provided with teaching manuals, methods and presentation techniques to enable them to pass on their knowledge to members of their own branches and to various other target groups.

As agreed upon in 1997, discussions on the expansion of ICRC activities to include visits to detainees in China were conducted through the regional delegation.

As in the past, the ICRC offered its technical support in connection with the humanitarian problems encountered by families split up since the 1950-1953 Korean war.

For the first time a three-day workshop on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, humanitarian law and the media was held for 25 Mongolian media representatives in Ulan Bator. This event was organized jointly by the ICRC, the Mongolian Red Cross Society and the Press Institute of Mongolia. The first workshop for instructors in the law of armed conflict took place over four days in September at the headquarters of the General Staff of the armed forces in the Mongolian capital.

In April an expatriate prosthetic/orthotic technician began a one-year mission in Viet Nam with the objective of improving the quality and increasing production of artificial limbs manufactured in the ICRC-supported centre in Ho Chi Minh City, and introducing polypropylene prostheses in the government-run rehabilitation centres of Da Nang, Quy Nhon and Can Tho. The ICRC's Special Fund for the Disabled continued to cover the cost of producing and fitting prostheses for destitute amputees not eligible for government support.

In November an ICRC delegation led by the organization's Vice-President took part in the Fifth Asia and Pacific Regional Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This event was organized jointly in Hanoi by the Federation and the Red Cross of Viet Nam.

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10 See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, p. 168.
The year under review will surely be described as a tumultuous year for Indonesia, with food shortages and spiralling prices triggering unrest and the popular demand for political and economic reform leading to widespread violent demonstrations and the resignation of the country's longstanding President. Against the backdrop of a devastated economy, the hardest hit by the Asian stock market crash, more than 30 Indonesian cities were rocked by social unrest. Medan in Sumatra and Solo and Jakarta in Central Java were the worst affected, but towns in Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor also saw mass demonstrations. In addition to the enormous material damage, the death toll in the capital alone reached 1,300 in mid-May, following two days of uncontrolled rioting and looting.

The ICRC's medical and relief operation launched in December 1997 in drought-stricken Irian Jaya continued until July. Despite logistic constraints and bad weather conditions, the ICRC, in conjunction with the Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI), distributed food to people living in the Mimika Regency. Medical assistance was given to some villagers on the spot while the seriously ill were evacuated to hospitals in Tembagapura or Timika. Cases of malaria were treated and malaria-control measures were taken at the community level. In some villages the incidence of this mosquito-borne disease dropped from 80% to a mere 10%.

The Red Cross operation in the Baliem valley was carried out in coordination with other humanitarian players in the region. The ICRC/PMI team focused on assessing needs, fine-tuning assistance and carrying out micro-distributions from places where food had been stocked. As in the Mimika Regency, seed distributions were carried out to help the local population regain its self-sufficiency. A medical and agricultural survey of villages bordering Papua New Guinea found that the Irianese in this jungle region had adequate food supplies and needed no aid. As there were no longer any pressing needs, the ICRC phased out its operations in Irian Jaya in July.

Clashes occurred in Biak, Jayapura, Manokwari and Sorong when the security forces forcibly dispersed students demanding independence for Irian Jaya.

Following the expulsion of several hundred Acehnese from Malaysia in March, the authorities agreed to allow the ICRC to resume activities in Aceh province after a hiatus of over a year. In May the ICRC began assessing the situation of some 500 returnees. An ICRC delegate based in Lhokseumawe worked closely...
medical supplies given to National Society

checking conditions of detainees

health promotion and water and sanitation in East Timor

restoring and maintaining family links

with PMI staff. The seriously ill or wounded were followed up by the ICRC and a PMI nurse and medical assistance was provided where necessary. Moreover, visits were conducted to military camps and police stations in East Aceh, North Aceh and Pidie districts.

In December the ICRC launched an assistance programme for victims of violence in the region in cooperation with the Indonesian Red Cross. Widows, the disabled and orphans are slated to receive family food parcels and/or school supplies.

In view of the social unrest throughout Indonesia, the ICRC placed medicines and other medical supplies at the National Society’s disposal. Red Cross volunteers were actively involved in the evacuation of students wounded in demonstrations and the provision of assistance to people who had been trapped in burning buildings during the looting in the capital.

The ICRC office in East Timor built up a stock of emergency medical supplies in response to the potential influx of wounded following the demonstrations in Dili and continued to monitor the food situation in villages affected by the drought resulting from the El Niño phenomenon.

As in the past, the ICRC continued to visit places of detention in various parts of Indonesia. Working with the PMI, delegates provided material and medical assistance where necessary, enabled detainees to contact or remain in touch with their relatives and organized family visits to Irianese and East Timorese 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.

The ICRC conducted its regular visits to detainees in East Timor in accordance with standard ICRC procedures and with the cooperation of the authorities concerned. Visits were also carried out to detainees receiving medical treatment in Dili’s military and civilian hospitals.

The ICRC/PMI water and sanitation teams in East Timor pursued projects that ranged from the sinking of individual wells to the building of large distribution networks. National Society staff assisted by an expatriate health delegate continued the health-promotion programme with the focus on malaria, vaccinations and the prevention of diarrhoea. The delegate also treated Timorese living in remote areas for skin and intestinal parasites. Red Cross staff took advantage of their presence in remote parts of the territory to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among local people.

As in previous years, and because Portugal has 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 at foreign embassies in Jakarta, as well as former civil servants in the Portuguese colonial administration. The delegation also organized a number of family reunifications. In addition, delegates forwarded Red Cross messages between Timorese in East Timor and relatives living elsewhere.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 107 detainees (54 of them for the first time) in 19 places of detention in Indonesia and 253 detainees (89 of them for the first time) being held in 37 places of detention in connection with the situation in East Timor;
- financed family visits to 79 detainees;
- organized a seminar in Yangon on health matters, particularly tuberculosis, in detention centres for 20 prison doctors from various provinces and townships; this event, which was also attended by the Deputy Director of Prisons, focused on how the ICRC functions, the role of the prison doctor and how ICRC prison visits are carried out;
- issued 35 travel documents;
- organized the transfer to Portugal of 34 East Timorese;
- collected 96 Red Cross messages and forwarded 72 in connection with East Timor;
- distributed 668 tonnes of food, consisting of high-protein biscuits, rice, beans, oil and salt, to 30,000 beneficiaries in 56 villages in Irian Jaya and handed out 1.5 tonnes of seed to the local population in the two regions most severely affected by the drought;
- carried out regular visits to promote health in 37 remote villages in East Timor;
- treated people living in 39 villages in Irian Jaya for malaria and provided medical supplies to the drought-stricken population;
- provided medical consultations and medicines to seriously ill or wounded Acehnese recently repatriated from Malaysia and fitted amputees with prostheses;
- harnessed 7 new sources of fresh water and maintained 29 existing water-supply systems in East Timor.
- provided the PMI with medicines and medical supplies for the treatment of people wounded during riots and looting;
- launched, in conjunction with the PMI, an assistance programme for victims of violence in Aceh; some 380 family parcels were handed out and 973 orphans received school supplies in the North Aceh district;
- took part in 11 presentations, workshops and courses for PMI trainers with a view to increasing the National Society's operational capacity;
- promoted humanitarian law in Indonesia among law professors and students, police instructors, legal practitioners, representatives of government institutions and NGOs, and Red Cross medical personnel and youth sections; these events were often held jointly with the PMI, the International Humanitarian Law Centre at Trisakti University, the Faculty of Law at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta or the North Sumatra University;
- gave presentations on humanitarian law for members of the armed and security forces based in East Timor;
- supported research carried out by the International Humanitarian Law Centre at Trisakti University on Indonesia's traditional laws of war found in books or manuscripts and their comparison with the modern law of armed conflict.
Besides responding to new developments in 1998, the ICRC continued to devote much time and effort to fostering knowledge of and compliance with humanitarian law and cooperating with the National Societies in the region. Presentations were given for various target groups, including current and future members of the legal profession, representatives of government institutions and Red Cross personnel. The ICRC also organized numerous seminars for members of the Indonesian armed forces on humanitarian law, the ICRC's role and mandate and the protection afforded by the red cross emblem. Similar sessions were held in Malaysia.

To strengthen the PMI's capacity to respond to disasters, including situations of unrest, the ICRC provided funds for and took part in National Society "train-the-trainers" courses. The delegation also included a component on humanitarian law and ICRC activities during disaster-preparedness seminars conducted in close cooperation with the Federation.

The ICRC conducted medical surveys in the provinces of Myanmar bordering on China, Laos and Thailand. Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria were among the conditions found to affect large sectors of the population. After having received the authorities' approval, the ICRC, together with the Myanmar Red Cross Society, began drawing up a health promotion programme which should be implemented in Shan state in early 1999. Assistance for the war-disabled in Myanmar continued to be monitored regularly by the ICRC's prosthetic/orthotic coordinator based in Cambodia.
MANILA
Regional delegation
(Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the other island territories of the Pacific)

The Asian financial crisis dealt a further blow to the weakened Philippines' economy and fuelled unrest in a volatile society in which it was increasingly difficult to distinguish between criminal and political activity. Confrontations between the armed forces and opposing Islamic or communist groups and infighting between various factions within the same movement affected Mindanao, Negros and Quezon in particular. Although negotiations between the government and the MILF* and NPA* produced some tangible results, guerrilla warfare remained the order of the day. Clashes in Mindanao forced thousands to flee their homes. Those who stayed behind were often subjected to various forms of abuse. A series of bomb attacks in Mindanao, killing 16 and injuring 175, targeted the civilian population rather than combatants. The ICRC repeatedly reminded the warring parties of their obligation to respect civilians and civilian property during military operations.

The regional delegation approached various Pacific States to encourage ratification of the Additional Protocols and the Ottawa treaty. The latter was ratified by Fiji, Niue and Samoa. In August the ICRC conducted the first course on international humanitarian law and human rights for Vanuatu's police and security forces. The ICRC attended the Eighth Programme Meeting of Pacific Red Cross Societies in Fiji. This event provided an opportunity to explore ways of strengthening the 13 National Societies concerned (some of which were in formation), in coordination with the Federation.

Several countries in the Pacific suffered severe drought owing to the El Niño weather phenomenon. Social tensions in Fiji, largely due to the beleaguered economy, were heightened by the resulting food shortages. In June the government was forced to declare a state of emergency in part of the country.

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* MILF: Moro Islamic Liberation Front
* NPA: New People's Army
The peace process in Papua New Guinea remained on course and hopes were high for a significant improvement in the country’s situation. Some of the people displaced by unrest in past years returned to their homes and settled without difficulty. However, at the year’s close some 5,000 displaced people were still accommodated in reception centres, and refugees in the Solomon Islands were not yet ready to return to Bougainville. The Federation stepped up its presence in Papua New Guinea following the three disastrous tidal waves in July.

The ICRC continued to monitor the humanitarian situation on the island of Bougainville, in close cooperation with the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society and the Federation. In addition, the ICRC organized a four-day seminar on the law of armed conflict in Port Moresby for 17 officers ranging in rank from captain to colonel in the country’s defence forces.

The ICRC pursued visits to detainees held in connection with the Muslim and communist insurgency in the Philippines. In the course of their visits, delegates assessed the material and psychological conditions of detention, made the necessary recommendations to the relevant authorities and distributed hygiene products and recreational items to all prison inmates. In cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross, the ICRC organized and financed visits by needy families to relatives detained in places far from their homes. For the first time, the ICRC was authorized to visit detainees held by the MILF.

The ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary during the release of detainees held by the NPA.

In its bid to extend contacts with insurgents in the field, the ICRC had discussions with local leaders of the RPA* and Abu Sayyaf (a Muslim fundamentalist group active in Mindanao with close links to the MILF). Subsequently, dissemination sessions were held for a group of RPA commanders.

In cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross, the ICRC assisted people displaced following fighting in Maguindanao and North Cotabato. Those accommodated in reception centres received food rations comprising rice, sardines and noodles, together with soap, and in some cases blankets and plastic sheeting.

The regional delegation actively promoted knowledge of and respect for humanitarian law among the Philippine police, including counter-insurgency units, and the armed forces. During its courses the ICRC employed officers from the country’s armed forces who had received specific training in the dissemination of the basic tenets of the law of armed conflict.

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* RPA: Revolutionary Proletarian Army, a dissident group of the communist NPA in the province of Negros Oriental
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 370 detainees (80 for the first time) in 97 places of detention in the Philippines;
- distributed recreational and personal hygiene articles and supplied places of detention with items necessary to maintain the detainees' health;
- financed family visits to 179 detainees in the Philippines;
- distributed, together with the Philippine National Red Cross, relief supplies to some 6,000 people displaced by fighting in the Philippines;
- organized dissemination events for 1,523 members of the armed forces, 1,340 members of the MILF, 238 members of the National Society and more than 1,300 civilians in the Philippines;
- inaugurated an "IHL corner" at the main library of the Philippines armed forces headquarters and gave a lecture there to 53 senior officers including the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Head of Training, with the Undersecretary of the Ministry of National Defence as the guest of honour;
- organized, in cooperation with the Australian government and National Society, a seminar in Canberra entitled "The international criminal court, between New York and Rome" for representatives of 21 countries in the Asia and Pacific region;
- co-organized, with the Australian Red Cross, a symposium entitled "Humanitarian Players: Competition or Complementarity" attended by high-level government, UN and NGO personnel and representatives of the media.
When conflict broke out in Kosovo, thousands of civilians took to the hills and forests to escape the fighting. Such makeshift shelters provide little protection from the harsh winters. The ICRC provided displaced people with blankets, warm clothes and stoves. By the end of the year, some 200,000 people had fled their homes.
Western and Central Europe and the Balkans

ICRC delegations:
Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

ICRC regional delegation:
Budapest

Staff
ICRC expatriates: 1 74
National Societies: 1 21
Local employees: 2 592

Total expenditure SFr 67,069,750

Expenditure breakdown
Protection/tracing: 16,580,372
Relief: 26,896,720
Health activities: 10,440,283
Cooperation with National Societies: 1,882,217
Promotion/dissemination: 4,001,095
Operational support: 3,725,559
Overheads: 3,543,504

1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1998.
Tension mounted again in the Balkans in 1998. Three years after the signing of the Dayton peace accord, hostilities in Kosovo, Serbia’s southern province, threatened to embroil neighbouring Albania and Macedonia. From February onwards, the ethnic divide between Serbs and the numerically superior Kosovar Albanians brought the region to the brink of disaster. Clashes between the Serb armed forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army took a heavy toll in civilian lives and caused thousands to flee their homes.

During 11 months of violence, the international community struggled to find a diplomatic solution to the political quagmire in Kosovo. In an attempt to make reason prevail over nationalism, foreign ministers of the major Western powers and Russia urged Serbian and ethnic Albanian leaders to come to the bargaining table, while international monitors of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe reported on cease-fire violations and tried to stop isolated clashes from escalating into wider hostilities. In October, high-level negotiations led to a temporary lull in the fighting in Kosovo.

As in previous years, the Balkans remained the theatre of one of the ICRC’s largest operations. In Albania and in neighbouring Montenegro, the major relief organizations provided humanitarian assistance for refugees flooding in from Kosovo and for displaced people. The ICRC, for its part, coordinated closely with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and with the Albanian and Yugoslav Red Cross Societies to distribute basic necessities and provide the refugees with medical care.

The ICRC adjusted its operational approach in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during the course of the year. In order to deal with ever-increasing numbers of casualties, by September it had shifted emergency operations into high gear. The organization repeatedly reminded the parties of their obligation to spare the population. Delegates did their utmost to establish the whereabouts of Serbs allegedly abducted by the Kosovo Liberation Army and kept up their visits to persons detained by the Serbian authorities.

Bosnia-Herzegovina inched its way towards economic self-sufficiency and recovery from the wounds of war. Unemployment remained high in both entities, but aid from foreign donors paved the way for reconstruction of the country’s basic infrastructure. While the international community concentrated its efforts on long-term rehabilitation projects, the ICRC’s activities in the entities focused primarily on the lasting consequences of the conflict. Together with National Red Cross Societies, the ICRC continued to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable groups in the society and support for key social and medical structures.

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3 The full title of the treaty is the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
The issue of missing persons remained a major obstacle to reconciliation efforts. The ICRC urged the international community to continue to help with exhumations and identification procedures and it encouraged local authorities to commit themselves more fully to the process. The ICRC itself took a comprehensive approach to the problems confronting the families of the missing by assisting them with legal and administrative formalities and, in conjunction with National Societies, arranging for psychological counselling in selected communities.

One sign of change in the Balkans was the full integration of Eastern Slavonia into Croatia. An international peace-keeping force stayed on in the region during the transition period, while the ICRC continued to monitor the situation both in Eastern Slavonia and in the former United Nations Sectors. As in the past, it concentrated on the protection of extremely vulnerable members of the civilian population, such as elderly Serbs living alone in outlying pockets of Eastern Slavonia.
Throughout the year ICRC representatives took part in various meetings and seminars aimed at strengthening international humanitarian law, alerting public opinion to the appalling damage caused by landmines and enlisting support for humanitarian operations, so as to be able to reach all those suffering from the effects of armed conflict and violence.

In June, the ICRC convened the second Humanitarian Forum in Wolfsberg, Switzerland. The main humanitarian agencies were represented, as were the major donor countries and the European Commission. Debate focused on the interdependence of humanitarian and political action, and how this functions in practice. In his concluding remarks, the ICRC President declared that greater attention should be paid to dissemination of the ethical values enshrined in human rights and international humanitarian law and to the need to develop and apply professional standards for humanitarian assistance.

In September, the ICRC took part in a conference in Dublin, Ireland, to discuss the "Landmine Monitor" project set up to monitor the implementation of the Ottawa treaty. The ICRC was asked to contribute information to the project, to be run by a network of non-governmental organizations and researchers who will compile mine-related information.

In February, the President of the ICRC was received by the French President and Prime Minister in Paris. The French authorities reiterated their support for the ICRC’s work, and the ICRC President commended France’s contribution to the process aimed at securing a total ban on anti-personnel mines. During a return visit to ICRC headquarters in Geneva in March, the French Prime Minister announced France’s intention to ratify Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions. By mid-year France had ratified the Ottawa treaty and had taken measures to destroy its entire stock of anti-personnel landmines.

In June the ICRC President made an official visit to Rome where he attended the Diplomatic Conference on the establishment of an International Criminal Court. During the opening plenary, the President stated that the establishment of an effective International Criminal Court was of particular importance to the ICRC as it would give greater weight to Article 1 common to the four 1949 Geneva Conventions whereby States undertake both to respect the provisions of the Conventions and to ensure respect for them.

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4 See pp. 319-321.
5 See pp. 312-313.
During an official visit in February to the United Kingdom, which at the time held the Presidency of the European Union, the ICRC President welcomed the British government's decision to ratify the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC President visited Vienna in May, prior to Austria's takeover of the EU presidency. In June, Mr Sommaruga was invited to address the European Union Political Committee in Brussels. He thanked the EU for its political and financial support and stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the EU and the ICRC. Also in June, an international conference was organized jointly by the European Community Humanitarian Office and the ICRC in Lisbon. The aim of the conference was to identify and discuss security issues in emergency situations.

As in the past, the ICRC pursued its efforts to establish closer links with political entities such as the OSCE.* This type of interaction should lead to greater complementarity in certain areas of common interest. In June, the President was invited to address the Permanent Council of the OSCE in Vienna, where he reiterated that many OSCE concerns were shared by the ICRC.

In April the ICRC took part in a meeting on post-conflict reconstruction organized by the World Bank in Paris. Among other topics, the meeting dealt with the link between politics and the prevention of conflicts, humanitarian aid and reconstruction and development. The ICRC shared its operational experiences concerning societies in transition, and expressed its willingness to foster its ties with the World Bank.

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* See p. 324.

* OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The period under review was an eventful one for this southern Balkan republic. In February, the outbreak of violence in neighbouring Kosovo led to an influx of refugees into the Tropoje area in northern Albania. The country's structural economic problems worsened and violent crime was rife during much of the year. Despite the unsettled political outlook, in 1998 Albanians voted for a change in the Constitution and the newly appointed Prime Minister met the leader of the opposition to discuss both domestic problems and the repercussions of the turmoil in Kosovo.

The arrival of refugees from Kosovo prompted the major relief organizations to put into effect their contingency plans for humanitarian assistance, giving priority to medical care and food aid. With the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Albanian Red Cross in the northern Bajram Curri and Tropoje districts distributed food and other emergency supplies to the newly arrived refugees, who were mostly women and children.

The ICRC, for its part, carried out emergency medical evacuations, provided Albania's medical facilities with direct support and helped restore family links. In June, a comprehensive assessment of medical needs was carried out by an ICRC doctor in the northern districts of Kukes, Krome and Tropoje. On his recommendation, medical kits (dressings, paediatric sets, injection and surgical material) were dispatched to the Tropoje district. When a spate of hostilities in Kosovo in mid-September brought a fresh wave of refugees, the ICRC responded by delivering surgical material for treatment of the war-wounded to refugee reception centres and to the university hospital in Tirana.

In 1998, some 26,000 people crossed the border from Kosovo into Albania. ICRC surveys showed that Albanian medical facilities did not have the means to cope with the situation on their own. The ICRC therefore launched an appeal for
funds to cover the immediate needs of medical facilities in areas with a heavy concentration of refugees, so as to ensure adequate treatment for the sick and wounded. The funds received were also used to provide basic training in war surgery for civilian and military surgeons in the country's main hospitals.

In addition to the problems stemming from the influx of refugees from Kosovo, in August Albania had to cope with civil unrest when thousands took to the streets in protest at the arrest of six officials from the Democratic Party. Two weeks later, the assassination of a Democratic Party leader and member of parliament triggered further disturbances in Tirana. The situation remained tense, since many weapons looted from depots during an earlier upheaval remained in circulation despite efforts by the Albanian government to recover them. These weapons posed a constant threat to the population, and civilians were often victims of incidents involving firearms and unexploded ordnance.

Throughout the year, the ICRC continued to coordinate closely with other relief organizations such as UNHCR and with the OSCE, as well as with the Albanian authorities, to keep humanitarian issues high on the agenda. Staff from the Ministry of Defence attended seminars on the law of armed conflict and on humanitarian principles. The ICRC also held discussions with the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior and with three military academies on the implementation of humanitarian law by the armed and security forces.

Within the police force, difficulty in recruiting professionals and a high staff turnover meant that knowledge of humanitarian law and its underlying principles was somewhat limited. To help remedy this, in May the ICRC held a three-day seminar in Tirana for 20 senior police officers of the Special Rapid Intervention Forces, which came under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Order. Following a request by the Ministry for further assistance in this field, more seminars were scheduled.

Continued cooperation with the Albanian Red Cross in the area of dissemination remained a priority for the ICRC. A series of six television programmes focusing on the dangers associated with landmines and with the mishandling of weapons was produced in conjunction with the National Society. The entire series was aimed at schoolchildren and young people in general, who were encouraged to find conciliatory solutions to problems and to become involved in the community and the local Red Cross.

In April, 80 volunteers attended five seminars at the Red Cross Youth branches in Durres, Fier, Gjirokaster, Korce and Shkoder. The aim of the seminars was to give the participants basic information on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and on international humanitarian law so that they, in turn, could promote the principles of both in their own schools.

The ICRC, together with the Albanian Red Cross, set up a radio message service to enable refugees from Kosovo to contact family members from whom they
had become separated because of the crisis in their country. This service allowed many families to inform their relatives of their whereabouts in Albania, and the names of missing persons were also broadcast. The traditional Red Cross message service continued to be available to refugee families. Following the arrival of several thousand refugees in September, the ICRC extended the message service to Shkoder.

From May onwards the ICRC, in accordance with its standard procedures, continued to visit prisons and police stations in Elbasan, Korce, Librazhd, Lushnje and Pogradec and to distribute basic hygiene items to detainees. The Tirana delegation received the necessary authorization and visited all those arrested in connection with the unrest of mid-September.

- assessed the conditions of detention and treatment of 12 detainees held in prisons and police stations and provided small-scale material assistance for inmates;
- broadcast the names of some 3,300 refugees from Kosovo on the radio to inform relatives who had stayed behind of their whereabouts and state of health;
- distributed 133 medical kits to the main hospitals in northern Albania and to the Central Military Hospital in Tirana;
- organized seminars on international humanitarian law for Red Cross Youth branches, so that volunteers could then provide instruction to some 8,000 secondary school pupils aged between 10 and 14 years;
- gave 23 presentations on humanitarian principles, the Red Cross and mine awareness for 591 members of the armed and police forces, and for local authorities.

IN 1998 THE ICRC:
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

In 1998 there were perceptible, albeit modest steps towards peace and reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Three years after the signing in Dayton of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, some degree of stability had returned to this war-ravaged region. The rattle of gunfire no longer threatened peace-keeping efforts in the country’s two entities – the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The mandate of the 30,000 strong NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) was extended indefinitely, a factor that contributed in no small measure to improved security and a brighter economic outlook. In both entities, economic indicators gave rise to cautious optimism, the first tentative efforts at reforms in the health, education and social sectors were initiated, and a nascent private sector emerged.

With the help of international donors, the two entities continued the dual transition from war to peace, and from a centrally planned to an open-market economy. Through the Priority Reconstruction Programme US$ 5.1 billion was earmarked for reconstruction in both entities. Funds from this programme were disbursed for housing projects, for improvements in electricity and water supplies and for the installation of communication networks.

In January Republika Srpska elected a new government, made up of moderates. The incoming leadership stressed their willingness to cooperate with the international community, their commitment to the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, and the need to restore trade links between Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

While international donors have tended to focus on long-term reconstruction projects, the ICRC has emphasized that immediate humanitarian and social needs cannot be neglected. Working with National Red Cross Societies and in
partnership with their Federation, the ICRC's primary concern in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to address the lasting consequences of the conflict – the issue of missing persons, the threat posed by landmines, and the need to support key social and medical structures. The country's social welfare system, which provided adequate services before the war, underwent a major overhaul and was still largely dependent on external funding. The ICRC, with several National Societies, helped establish a safety net for the most needy groups in the society by providing support for health services and distributing food and other basic necessities.

The cornerstone of the ICRC's activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1998 was again the search for persons who were still unaccounted for. The issue of missing persons remained a major obstacle to reconciliation efforts, as uncertainty about the whereabouts of family members cast a shadow over intercommunity relations. Anxious families needed to know the truth so that they could come to terms with the pain of bereavement. The ICRC therefore continued to support efforts made in that area by the authorities and by international organizations.

Officials in both entities were encouraged to release all available information on persons whose fate was unknown and the ICRC continued to coordinate meetings of the Working Group on Missing Persons, a body set up in 1996 which included families of the missing, the local Red Cross, party officials and members of the international community. Throughout the year the ICRC adopted a comprehensive approach towards the families of the missing, helping them with legal and administrative formalities. It also supported projects for the burial of unidentified exhumed remains in temporary sites, and continued to urge the international community to contribute further to the exhumation and identification process.

A significant breakthrough in the search for missing persons came with the joint exhumation process, whereby each of the former warring factions was able to exhume its dead on territory controlled by the other entity. Under the coordination of the OHR,* exhumations resumed during the first week of March. Throughout the rest of the year the three communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina were able to analyse and autopsy mortal remains exhumed from sites outside their own entities. On a number of occasions, upon their request, the ICRC arranged for relatives of missing persons to travel to exhumation sites where they assisted in the location of burial grounds and the identification of remains.

Working in tandem with the local Red Cross, the ICRC helped provide answers to tracing requests from anxious families. Since the tracing process began in Bosnia-Herzegovina, almost two thousand families have received information on the fate of missing relatives as a result of the ICRC's tracing activities in the field, the efforts of the Working Group and exhumations performed by the authorities.

*B OHR: Office of the High Representative appointed to oversee implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement
Some 18,500 families remain without news of their loved ones and ICRC staff have painstakingly delved through all possible sources of information, including the databases of the ICTY* in The Hague, in an effort to relieve their uncertainty. The ICRC continued a project begun the year before in The Hague when the organization financed costs for a staff of 32 people to sift through some 60,000 pages of reports gathered by Tribunal investigators.

The protection of vulnerable individuals among the civilian population, such as members of ethnic minorities, remained on the ICRC agenda in 1998. Although the number of detainees of concern to the ICRC decreased, visits to monitor conditions of detention continued and contacts were maintained with the authorities. The ICRC continued to coordinate with other organizations involved in the protection of civilians and detainees, particularly the IPTF.* Following reports from families of missing persons, visits were made to alleged places of detention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. No hidden detainees were found in any of the places visited, which included penitentiaries and one mine. The ICRC also helped a number of families to visit relatives detained in the other entity.

Throughout 1998 the ICRC continued to cooperate with the local Red Cross in meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs. In a bid to restore food security, early in the year it assisted in the implementation of the second phase of a winter relief programme, begun in 1997, under which food parcels, clothing and fuel were distributed to vulnerable families in both urban and rural areas. The beneficiaries were identified by local Red Cross branches and included elderly people living alone, single-parent families, and other groups without a source of income. The programme had an important secondary effect in that the ICRC took out contracts for the production or supply of goods with companies throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, thus supporting the local economy and promoting self-reliance.

Farming families in the Banja Luka and Doboj districts received winter wheat seed and fertilizer, and a seed programme was also carried out in the spring. Seed distribution began at the end of February in the southern regions of Trebinje and Mostar, and continued throughout March and April in the colder mountainous areas. As a result of ongoing efforts to improve seed multiplication techniques, most items were procured locally.

With the support of the Austrian and German Red Cross, the local Red Cross branches in the regions of Banja Luka, Doboj and Sarajevo ran a community kitchen programme throughout the year. The American Red Cross supplied local Red Cross branches in the areas of Bijeljina, Tuzla and Zenica with meals for the elderly.

* ICTY: International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
* IPTF: United Nations International Police Task Force
A chronic shortage of funds continued to beset the health care system in both
the Federation and Republika Srpska. Some progress was made, however, when
the Ministries of Health in both entities prepared and accepted a basic health care
package. The ICRC again acted as an intermediary between the authorities, inter­
national organizations and health and social institutions, and urged them to pro­
vide greater support for medical facilities. While reforms were being carried out in
the medical sector, particularly in the field of primary health care, ICRC assistance
was still necessary to meet immediate needs. The ICRC therefore maintained its
support to hospitals and provided basic surgical supplies on a monthly basis.

The ICRC broadened its efforts to help the Ministries of Health in the set up of
a primary health care system. After identifying domains where it could assist, it
began negotiations with the Federation's Ministry of Health concerning the nurs­
ing component of the project, and indicated locations for the implementation of
health schemes that would involve participation by local communities. Three
regions were selected for involving community members in local health issues by
initiating and supporting "community development for health" measures. The ICRC
worked with the local Red Cross to implement this part of the primary
health care project, thereby promoting self-reliance in health matters. To enable
health-care professionals and decision-makers to upgrade their skills in the area of
primary health care, the ICRC assisted selected training projects for doctors and
paid for local doctors to attend courses on the subject in London and Dublin.

The ICRC cooperated with partner National Societies to assist social welfare
institutions particularly in Republika Srpska. National Societies carried out
repairs on the premises of some of these institutions. Emphasis then shifted to
staff training.

Many thousands of people, particularly the families of the missing, were still
suffering from the psychological effects of the war, and several National Societies
organized counselling sessions in communities in the Tuzla region. Other people
were having to cope with physical disabilities and during the year National
Societies helped to ease their plight by providing individuals with medical treat­
ment or by improving their living conditions. The National Societies of Austria,
Belgium, Italy, Norway, Spain and Switzerland all had ongoing programmes in
these fields.

In 1998 the ICRC substantially reduced its water and sanitation programme
throughout Bosna-Herzegovina. As planned, it rehabilitated water pumping sta­
tions in four municipalities in the eastern part of Republika Srpska, a project that
will eventually bring piped water to some 35,000 people. Under ICRC super­
vision, the inter-entity Jahorina pipeline was also rehabilitated, thus improving the
water supply situation for up to ten per cent of Sarajevo's population. An agree­
ment on the operation of the pipeline was signed in July by the municipalities of
Pale and Sarajevo. This agreement, essential for the continued functioning of the
IN 1998 THE ICRC:
- visited 41 persons in 15 places of detention who were being held in connection with the conflict or who were considered to be in need of continued protection;
- financed visits to detainees held by the ICTY in The Hague for relatives who did not have the means to pay their own way;
- collected 394 and submitted 236 tracing requests to the Working Group on Missing Persons and was able to provide answers in 10 cases;
- published a fourth edition of a catalogue containing 19,934 names of missing persons and distributed 8,700 copies to all members of the Red Cross network involved in the tracing process;
- provided information on the fate of 752 missing persons, with 608 of the answers supplied by the former warring parties during the Working Group sessions and a further 144 obtained as a result of the ICRC's own tracing activity;
- collected 1,080 and distributed 884 Red Cross messages;
- reunited 4 individuals with their families;
- during the 1997/98 winter, provided a total of 60,000 families with food, hygiene parcels, winter clothing and blankets, stoves and fuel;
- in the spring, restored food security to 4,700 families by providing them with 1,920 tonnes of seed, together with 2,738 tonnes of fertilizer and tools;
- provided emergency food parcels for 10,000 needy people;
- facilitated bilateral projects carried out by the Austrian and German Red Cross Societies to provide hot meals for a total of 4,650 people per day;
- regularly provided 27 hospitals throughout the country with surgical supplies and essential drugs for chronic diseases;
- supplied 23 blood transfusion services with tests, serum and blood bags, and provided medical kits and needles on a monthly basis;
- facilitated bilateral programmes run by the Norwegian, Swiss and Italian Red Cross Societies in psychiatric hospitals, homes for the elderly and institutions for the mentally and physically disabled;
- rehabilitated a reservoir in Pale so that 1 million litres of water could be stored for the town's 25,000 inhabitants;
- facilitated a bilateral water quality control programme, carried out by the Swedish Red Cross;
- completed the cleaning of 3 wells in Bratunac, which resulted in a 75 per cent increase in the amount of water available to the population of 18,300;
- assisted the tracing services of the Federation Red Cross and the Red Cross of Republika Srpska by paying for furniture, equipment and salaries;
- helped the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to organize a first-aid competition in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina;
- organized summer camps with the local Red Cross in Bosnia-Herzegovina for 3,513 children in different towns, with financial aid from the Norwegian Red Cross and the International Federation;
- gave 67 presentations on the law of armed conflict, the Red Cross and humanitarian principles for 2,766 members of the armed forces of both entities, NATO, SFOR, local authorities and Red Cross volunteers;
- held 14 training workshops for 334 teachers as part of a programme to promote Red Cross values.
- gave presentations on mine awareness for some 168,555 people;
water supply system, was reached on the initiative of the ICRC and represented an important step towards better cooperation between the two municipalities.

The ICRC continued to coordinate closely with the International Federation and participating National Societies throughout the year, and established a closer partnership with the local Red Cross, thereby ensuring a coordinated approach by the Movement to needs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Under the auspices of the Inter-Entity Red Cross Contact Group, Red Cross officials from Republika Srpska and from the Federation began discussions on the formation and recognition of a single National Society for the entire country.
The year began with the reintegration of Eastern Slavonia into the Republic of Croatia. On 15 January, UNTAES* ended its two-year mission and officially relinquished control over the last portion of formerly Serb-held territory in Croatia. Worries about the consequences of the transfer prompted an exodus of local Serbs to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and other European countries. The Croatian authorities, for their part, anticipated an influx of some 80,000 people into Eastern Slavonia, but the actual number of returnees was fewer than predicted. Returning Croats and the local Serb community remained at odds over contentious issues such as the restitution of property. During the transitional period, a support group of 180 police observers and representatives of international and intergovernmental organizations stayed on until late September, after which the task of monitoring was handled by the OSCE.

Throughout the year, the thorny issue of displaced and refugee Serbs considerably hampered efforts to achieve national reconciliation. Some progress was made, however, when at the end of June the Croatian authorities adopted a Plan for the Return and Accommodation of Displaced Persons, Refugees and Exiled Persons. The international community welcomed this move, but made it clear that only successful implementation of the plan would enhance Croatia's chances of being accepted as a member of European institutions.

The gradual improvement of relations between Croatia and its neighbours also contributed to the recovery process. Negotiations resumed between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia on the issue of cross-border traffic, and the two countries signed an agreement on the use of the Croatian port of Ploce, whereby Bosnia-Herzegovina gained access to the Adriatic. Croatia was granted transit

* UNTAES: United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium
rights through the Bosnian town of Neum. Zagreb also maintained contact with Republika Srpska, in particular on the question of the return of displaced persons and refugees, and submitted a proposal to the government in Belgrade in an attempt to finally resolve their dispute over the Prevlaka peninsula.

During 1998, the ICRC considerably scaled down its programmes for civilians in the former conflict zones, because of the gradual decline in the population’s need for assistance. ICRC field offices in Knin, Vojnic and Beli Manastir ceased operations at the end of the year. The decision to reduce ICRC activities was based on the limitations of the organization’s mandate, which relates more specifically to victims of conflict. While the ICRC felt that protection and assistance programmes in Croatia might be more appropriately covered by other governmental and non-governmental organizations, it nevertheless decided to maintain its activities on behalf of families of the missing. It also kept up its support for the Croatian Red Cross mine-awareness programme and the National Society’s efforts to propagate Red Cross values, and continued to promote humanitarian law in military, academic and government circles.

As in the past, the ICRC monitored the situation both in Eastern Slavonia and in the former UN Sectors, concentrating on the protection of the civilian population, particularly members of ethnic minorities. The return to the former Sectors North and South of destitute refugees from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia caused some apprehension, since their arrival heightened the tension between the different communities. In Eastern Slavonia, the ICRC informed the local authorities of its concern about the security of vulnerable groups. ICRC delegates documented evidence of ethnically motivated attacks, mostly on returning Serbs and Croats who had recently resettled in the region.

The ICRC continued to assist returnees and vulnerable individuals, providing them with ad hoc support. In Eastern Slavonia, the ICRC food programme was gradually pared down over the year as the Croatian authorities assumed greater responsibilities, notably in the social welfare sector. From May onwards the relief effort in Eastern Slavonia was administered by the Federation and by the Croatian Red Cross.

Delegates continued to visit places of detention, where they saw mainly persons detained in connection with the Croatian conflict or held for security-related offences. The ICRC made another small contribution towards normal relations with its programme, begun the year before, under which families from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia could visit detainees held in Croatia. A reciprocal arrangement allowed Croatian families to visit their relatives detained in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Another key concern remained the number of persons still unaccounted for after the 1991 conflict in Croatia and the 1995 military operations in the former UN Sectors. A thaw in relations between Croatia and the Federal Republic of
In 1998 the ICRC:

- conducted 64 visits to 14 different places of detention, where a total of 75 persons were detained in connection with the conflict or for security-related offences;
- supervised the release of 3 detainees, 2 of whom were transferred to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia under ICRC auspices;
- enabled 248 relatives to visit 139 detainees held in Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- collected 766 and distributed 845 Red Cross messages on behalf of vulnerable individuals living in remote areas in Eastern Slavonia and the former Sectors, and reunited 27 people, including former detainees, with their families in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

- carried out regular visits to remote villages in the former Sectors North and South to check on the living conditions and safety of the civilian population in general and several thousand elderly Serbs in particular; if any of them had been subjected to harassment, made representations on their behalf to the authorities;
- distributed 826 tonnes of food and other relief supplies to 15,000 vulnerable individuals in Eastern Slavonia and the former Sectors;
- implemented a spring seed programme for returnees in Eastern Slavonia, providing them with 28,370 vegetable seed kits;
- provided snacks and hot meals daily to 6,600 pupils at schools and kindergartens in Eastern Slavonia, through a project delegated to the German Red Cross;
- organized a seminar for 20 staff of the tracing services of Croatian Red Cross branches in Eastern Slavonia;
- held a 6-day workshop in Topusko, under the joint ICRC/Croatian Red Cross Youth Programme. The aim of the workshop, which brought together 20 Red Cross secretaries and youth leaders from all over Croatia, was to introduce dissemination techniques and new methods to be employed in future activities;
- gave 1,295 presentations on mine-awareness for 25,851 people;
- trained 23 new instructors to implement mine-awareness programmes.
Yugoslavia led to some progress in this area. The ICRC attended two sessions of the Croatian and Yugoslav government commissions for missing persons as an observer.

In 1998 the ICRC kept up its programme to restore and maintain contact between family members separated by the conflict. The family reunification programme covered vulnerable individuals who, owing to their age, health or difficult living conditions, needed the assistance of relatives. Under the auspices of UNHCR, a number of vulnerable people who had remained in Croatia were able to rejoin relatives in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ICRC's role in this programme was to exchange Red Cross messages between vulnerable persons in Croatia and their relatives abroad.

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance remained a deadly threat in the former front-line areas. Together with the Croatian Red Cross, the ICRC conducted mine-awareness workshops and trained new instructors for mine-infested areas not previously covered. Representatives of the National Society, in conjunction with the ICRC, presented a mine-awareness programme to CROMAC, the government body responsible for all mine-related activities in Croatia.

The ICRC once again cooperated closely with the National Society. Together with the tracing departments of Croatian Red Cross branches in Eastern Slavonia, the ICRC organized a seminar for staff members and volunteers.
Violence erupted in yet another corner of the Balkans in 1998. Clashes between Serbian security forces and ethnic Albanians claimed hundreds of lives and prompted large-scale population movements, mostly within Kosovo proper but also to Montenegro, Yugoslavia’s smaller republic, and Albania. Throughout the year, the six-nation Contact Group* prodded the Yugoslav President and ethnic Albanian leaders towards the negotiating table in an effort to resolve a crisis that brought NATO forces to the brink of military confrontation with Yugoslavia. Intense efforts on the part of the international community to broker a political settlement to the dispute resulted in an agreement reached on 13 October 1998. The United States special envoy to the region and the Yugoslav President, agreed that a 2,000-strong Verification Mission would be deployed in Kosovo under the aegis of the OSCE. Following this agreement, responsibility for the security of civilians rested firmly with the Serbian authorities, while the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK), for its part, committed itself to respecting the cease-fire. By December, however, the situation had taken a turn for the worse, with violence against civilians escalating considerably.

As tension mounted in Kosovo, the ICRC sub-delegation there saw a change in the tenor of its activities. In accordance with the Seville Agreement7 the ICRC assumed the role of lead agency in directing and coordinating the international relief operation of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. By August 1998, the entire range of ICRC emergency operations was being

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* Contact Group: France, Germany, Italy, Russia, United Kingdom, United States.

7 See pp. 350-351.
implemented, and throughout the year the organization continued to expand the presence it had maintained in Kosovo since 1991. The number of delegates was increased in Pristina and in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro. Relief teams travelled to places where the displaced were huddled in makeshift shelters, medical teams ferried the wounded to hospitals and a group of local surgeons was transported to remote areas to perform surgery on the spot. Tragedy struck when an ICRC vehicle with a medical team on board drove over a mine near Pristina. One local surgeon was killed and three other members of the group were injured. Delegates carried out field trips on an almost daily basis in order to gain as much information as possible about conditions in the towns and villages affected by the fighting. ICRC teams took these opportunities to strengthen their contacts with representatives of both sides, and provided them with information on the role and activities of the ICRC and the Federation in Kosovo.

The escalation of hostilities prompted the ICRC to increase its protection and tracing services for civilians, who were the main victims of the violence. Throughout the year, the organization maintained a dialogue with the Yugoslav authorities and representatives of the ethnic Albanian community with a view to finding the most appropriate humanitarian response to the crisis. It placed particular emphasis on ensuring the physical safety of ethnic Albanians and Serbs who were not or were no longer taking part in armed confrontation, particularly unarmed civilians and the wounded, and did everything in its power to establish the whereabouts of Serbs reportedly abducted by members of the UCK and of Albanians who had been arrested.

Following the October agreement between the OSCE and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, significant numbers of displaced people were able to return to their villages. However, the tense security situation meant that both ethnic Albanian and Serb communities lived in fear of harassment, abduction or arrest. Through its daily field trips throughout Kosovo, the ICRC kept a close watch on the situation and reported incidents that affected the security of the civilian population to the relevant authorities.

As in the past, delegates continued their visits to persons detained on both sides. From October onwards, a new round of visits to detainees held by the Serbian authorities in connection with the hostilities was begun, the ICRC having received authorization to visit detention centres in Kosovo and elsewhere in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. For the first time, the authorities agreed to a system of notification and subsequently informed the ICRC of the presence of a number of detainees. Delegates continued to work on a written agreement with the authorities to obtain full notification of and access to all those detained for State security reasons. The ICRC submitted a draft of the agreement to the government in October.
Although ICRC activities for most of the year focused primarily on emergency relief operations in Kosovo, the search for persons missing since the conflict between Croatia and Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina remained a top priority. Delegates visited a village and a mine in Serbia without giving the authorities advance notice, in order to follow up allegations of "hidden" Bosnian and Croatian detainees. However, no evidence was found to corroborate these allegations.

Between March and the end of the year, over 200,000 people were displaced by the fighting. The UCK made a failed attempt in July to capture the town of Orahovac. By that time it had rapidly expanded both its manpower and the areas under its control and claimed to hold sway over 30-40 per cent of the territory of Kosovo. The Serbian security forces repulsed the attack Orahovac and then carried out a massive operation across western and central Kosovo. By late August, the security forces had regained control over virtually the whole of Kosovo, including the Drenica region. These operations prompted large-scale population movements, and in early December several hit-and-run attacks on civilians in urban centres and the build-up of government troops gave rise to fears of renewed hostilities. Tensions finally escalated into full-scale clashes between the UCK and the security forces in late December, notably in the Podujevo area.

To respond to the needs of the displaced, the ICRC increased its logistic capacity and organized emergency stocks of food and other items in the region. Emergency relief supplies were distributed to groups of displaced people in Kosovo as they tried to find temporary shelter in the countryside or in villages affected by the fighting. In Podgorica, the ICRC strengthened its links with the Montenegrin branch of the Yugoslav Red Cross, to help it deal with the waves of people arriving in Montenegro. Several thousand people poured in from Kosovo every week, stretching the capacity of the local authorities, and in particular the Montenegro Red Cross, to the limit. By mid-August the number of internally displaced persons from Kosovo who were registered in Montenegro had swollen considerably, and their situation in terms of accommodation, hygiene and medical needs was giving cause for serious concern.

The ICRC also provided the Serbian branch of the Yugoslav Red Cross with humanitarian aid to respond to the requirements of the displaced population. In addition, the Federation continued its assistance programme for thousands of needy people in both the Serb and the ethnic Albanian communities.

One of the most pressing challenges for the ICRC was to provide the displaced with emergency assistance at the onset of the region's harsh winter. Basic items such as warm clothing, blankets and stoves were distributed to help them survive the winter months. The ICRC also increased its logistic support to the Montenegro Red Cross, renting warehouses in Ulcinj, Rozaje and Berane to facilitate operations in the northern region during the winter when road conditions were at their worst.
From October onwards the ICRC focused its relief distributions in Kosovo on displaced persons and families who were returning to isolated communities and who were cut off from general distribution sites either by security constraints or because of their remoteness. Under this programme, which complemented the relief activities coordinated by UNHCR, the ICRC pinpointed areas where the displaced were in urgent need of rapid assistance and provided additional food for various distribution centres throughout Kosovo. The need for assistance was tremendous, on account of the rigorous winter conditions, the destruction of property, and the impossibility of an autumn harvest. In December, in addition to bringing in relief supplies and winter items, the ICRC assessed the potential for initiating rehabilitation projects.

Throughout the summer, medical activities were centered on the supply of surgical material to health structures and treatment of the wounded. After the cease-fire agreement came into force in October, emphasis shifted to facilitating access to health care for the population, particularly in villages. The pre-crisis health system in the villages had disintegrated as many facilities had been totally destroyed, medical staff had left and no supplies had been received for many months. In larger towns and cities, hospitals and the main health centres continued to function, albeit with reduced resources. However, the prevailing insecurity prevented people living in the villages from travelling to the towns.

The need for medical and surgical material increased with the growing number of casualties from the shelling and fighting. Assistance was given to medical facilities throughout Kosovo, from State hospitals to improvised first-aid posts. The Norwegian Red Cross donated surgical dressing materials and volunteer surgeons from Pristina were transported to first-aid posts whenever new casualties were signalled and the security situation permitted. In Montenegro, the ICRC supplied health centres with essential drugs to help them cope with the growing demand.

The ICRC responded to the emergency needs of rural and urban communities in Kosovo in terms of water supply and sanitation and continued to monitor the situation and seek appropriate solutions. Both displaced people and residents benefited from ICRC spring protection and latrine construction programmes in schools and dispensaries in selected villages. In Suha Reka, the ICRC repaired chlorination equipment and supplied spare parts to local water boards.

Following meetings in Vienna, Warsaw and Pristina, the ICRC began to play a role in the training of incoming members of the Kosovo Verification Mission. From November onwards, the ICRC gave presentations and talks on its mandate, its protection and detention activities and its work in Kosovo.

Spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law was also high on the ICRC agenda. A seminar on humanitarian law was held for senior officers of the Yugoslav Army in Belgrade. Among the topics discussed during the seminar was the incorporation of humanitarian law into the training of the Yugoslav armed
forces. The ICRC dissemination team in Belgrade was invited to give presenta-
tions to the teaching staff of military schools and academies on the organization's
mandate and its activities during armed conflicts. Basic courses in the law of
armed conflict for students and cadets were organized by the Yugoslav Army,
while the ICRC provided teaching materials and publications.

IN 1998 THE ICRC:
- visited 540 detainees held for security reasons by the Yugoslav authorities in 19 places
  of detention;
- tried to establish the whereabouts of 139 persons reportedly held by the UCK;
- reunited 8 people with their families in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;
- collected 300 and distributed 239 Red Cross messages;
- distributed 2,322 tonnes of food and non-food items to internally displaced people in
  Kosovo;
- handed over 1,113 tonnes of food and non-food items to the Yugoslav Red Cross for distribu-
tion to internally displaced people throughout the country;
- provided 36 health facilities in Kosovo with medical and surgical supplies;
- provided 3 health facilities in Montenegro with medical supplies;
- met emergency needs in Kosovo by providing technical and material assistance to improve
  local sanitation infrastructure, water and public health services and conducted spring protection
  and latrine construction programmes in schools and dispensaries in Pagarusha, Gorica, Ponorc and Lapchevo villages;
- gave approximately 15,000 people access to safe drinking water by cleaning 60 wells;
- gave 7 presentations on the laws of armed conflict, the Red Cross and humanitarian
  principles to 216 members of the Yugoslav armed and security forces.
TURKEY

The ICRC had talks with the Turkish authorities on several occasions in 1998. Both sides gave their assessment of the situation in the country and discussed the humanitarian implications of Turkey's military operations in northern Iraq. The ICRC once again emphasized its willingness to contribute to Turkey's own efforts to tackle outstanding humanitarian issues and outlined its traditional activities which could yield real benefits. Throughout the year, the ICRC endeavoured to maintain a constructive dialogue with the Turkish authorities and to reach agreement on some of its proposals.

In February and again in May the Delegate-General and the regional delegate for Western and Central Europe and the Balkans travelled to Ankara for talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They also met the President and Director General of the Turkish Red Crescent Society. Discussions focused on enhancing the ICRC's cooperation with the National Society, particularly in the fields of dissemination and tracing. Finally, the ICRC continued to offer its services to promote knowledge of humanitarian law among the Turkish armed forces.
BUDAPEST
Regional delegation
(Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia)

Throughout the year, the regional delegation closely followed developments in Kosovo, to anticipate their repercussions on the humanitarian situation in other Balkan States. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, relations remained strained between Macedonians and ethnic Albanians, who comprise roughly a third of the population. Spring brought a spate of violence in Kosovo and from March onwards a number of Albanians crossed the border into Macedonia to seek refuge with friends and relations in the country. The status of this group was hard to define, since the authorities classified them as "ordinary visitors" rather than "real refugees", making it difficult for humanitarian organizations to verify their exact number.

In view of the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo, as of 1 June the ICRC mission in Skopje, which had been functioning as a sub-delegation attached to the Budapest regional delegation, became fully operational and began reporting directly to Geneva. To prepare for the possibility of an influx of refugees from Kosovo, the ICRC cooperated closely with the Macedonian Red Cross and the Federation. The Macedonian Red Cross and the Federation built up contingency stocks, while the ICRC and the National Society prepared to respond to tracing, protection and emergency medical needs.

The Budapest regional delegation saw considerable political and social changes in the other countries it covered during the year. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia started negotiations for membership of the European Union and, in the case of the first three, NATO. The move from centrally planned to market economies, while doubtless bringing benefits to the region, also gave rise to an amalgam of political, social and economic problems. During this complex transition period the ICRC kept up its support for dissemination, tracing, communication and promotional activities in all the countries covered by the delegation.

In the Czech Republic, the regional delegate outlined the new ICRC structure in the region to officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, and emphasized the need to develop dialogue on humanitarian issues. In May a course in the law of armed conflict was conducted at a military academy in Budapest. This was the first dissemination activity to be carried out for the Hungarian Home Defence Force since 1991; it took place just over one month after an agreement on cooperation in this sphere was signed by the ICRC President and the
Hungarian Minister of Defence. A series of workshops on the law of armed conflict continued throughout the year, with the aim of increasing knowledge of humanitarian law within key officer training institutions. The Slovenian Red Cross organized its third international youth camp in July, bringing together participants from other European National Societies. The primary goals of the camp were to promote tolerance, especially in the former Yugoslavia, and to enhance knowledge of the Red Cross as a humanitarian organization.

At the end of March the ICRC helped organize a regional conference on anti-personnel landmines in Budapest. During the conference, which was attended by defence and foreign affairs officials from 19 Central and East European States as well as representatives of National Red Cross Societies, the issue of anti-personnel mines in the region was discussed in the light of the Convention adopted in Ottawa in December 1997. The conference was the first important gathering of its kind organized in the region since the treaty was signed and was held in parallel with a meeting of non-governmental organizations, convened by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

The regional delegation organized a visit to the Slovenian capital Ljubljana by the ICRC President on the occasion of Slovenia’s presidency of the UN Security Council during the month of August, and to mark the fifth anniversary on 25 August of recognition of the Slovenian Red Cross as a new National Society. The visit included individual meetings with the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Meetings were also held with the Secretaries of State for Health and Defence.

The ICRC President visited Bucharest from 29 to 31 August at the invitation of the Romanian President. The President met, among others, the Romanian President, the Chairman of the Senate, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Chief of Staff of the Romanian Army, the President of the Alliance for Romania party and the former Minister for Foreign Affairs.

An agreement on the dissemination of international humanitarian law among Romanian armed forces was signed in Bucharest on 31 August by the Chief of Staff of the Romanian Army, on behalf of the Minister of Defence, and the ICRC President.
A small bag of seeds may be all that is needed to set victims of war back on the path to self-sufficiency. In 1998, the ICRC distributed 6,250 tonnes of seed and thousands of agricultural tools in 20 countries.
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: 110
National Societies: 28
Local employees: 903

Total expenditure

Sfr 50,304,286

Expenditure breakdown
Protection/tracing: 13,239,161
Relief: 14,690,306
Health activities: 7,230,933
Cooperation with National Societies: 2,018,483
Promotion/dissemination: 5,953,812
Operational support: 4,519,332
Overheads: 2,652,259

1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1998.

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA
For the third year in succession, situations of neither war nor peace prevailed in many of the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia where conflicts had flared up after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although cease-fire agreements signed over three years ago held for the most part, there was little progress in addressing the underlying causes of the conflicts or in establishing peace settlements, and 1998 was marked by an upsurge of armed incidents throughout the region.

In Georgia, high-level contacts continued between the Georgian and Abkhaz authorities, but hopes of a solution receded when fighting broke out again in the Gali region in May. In Tajikistan too, repeated armed clashes put an end to any prospect of early national reconciliation, although both government and opposition leaders remained committed to the peace process. Meanwhile, political crisis in Armenia stalled attempts to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, and in the Russian Federation negotiations over the future status of Chechnya were deadlocked. In addition, there were fears that civil war might break out in Chechnya and in Daghestan.

In the absence of lasting political settlements, humanitarian problems remained unresolved. The need for emergency aid has been superseded by the need for development and reconstruction, but the investment required for economic recovery will not be forthcoming until stability returns to the region, and displaced persons are unwilling to return to their homes as their safety is not guaranteed. Moreover, the economic crisis which hit the Russian Federation in August dealt a further blow to an entire region which has been struggling to switch to a market economy since 1992. The constant decline in living standards, the breakdown of the social and health services, soaring crime rates and recurrent political crises all generated a growing sense of insecurity and frustration among the population. Against this backdrop, the ICRC and other humanitarian organizations encountered serious difficulties, especially in the northern Caucasus.

The ICRC pursued its efforts to protect and assist civilians and detainees still suffering the effects of armed conflict in the region. Many of the remaining prisoners of war and civilians captured during the Abkhaz and Nagorny Karabakh conflicts were visited. The ICRC continued to receive new tracing requests concerning people still unaccounted for in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, adding to the 2,200 requests already registered and submitted to the parties of the conflict since 1997. Unfortunately, progress in this regard seems unlikely until a political settlement is reached.

In Armenia and Georgia the ICRC again had access to both common law and security detainees. Negotiations were pursued in other countries of the region with a view to establishing similar visiting programmes.

During the year under review, the ICRC shifted the emphasis of its operations to rebuilding local capacities and restoring the self-sufficiency of the civilian population where possible, while maintaining emergency stocks so as to be ready to respond to a new crisis at any time. Many relief programmes were scaled down, and, particularly in
Abkhazia and Nagorny Karabakh, short-term agronomy programmes were carried out to restore a degree of food security to villages in former conflict areas. In Chechnya, relief operations continued as before, and the water distribution programme was maintained, as the poor condition of sewage and water-supply systems continued to represent a major public health hazard.

To assist the war-wounded and the victims of armed clashes, the ICRC continued its support for hospitals, in particular in Abkhazia and Tajikistan. A similar programme in Azerbaijan was phased out, as it no longer corresponded to a real need.

Another constant concern was the alarming spread of tuberculosis (TB) throughout the former Soviet Union, particularly among the prison population. The ICRC consolidated its TB control programme in prisons in Azerbaijan and set up a similar programme in Georgia.

The process of reforming the legal systems of all the newly independent States offers a unique opportunity for ensuring incorporation of international humanitarian law in the national legislation. The ICRC drew up studies on the legislation of all the States in the light of humanitarian law, and submitted commentaries to the authorities on draft revisions.

As part of a comprehensive strategy to make the humanitarian rules and principles part of the very foundations of society in this inherently unstable region, the ICRC continued to approach political, military, educational and academic circles. The authorities have generally proven receptive to the ICRC’s dissemination programmes. In Russia, Belarus, Tajikistan and Estonia, the law of armed conflict is already an obligatory component of military training. By the end of the year, a growing number of universities were offering courses on humanitarian law.

The vast programme of dissemination in schools, set up in the Russian Federation in 1995 and subsequently extended to other countries of the region, is designed to make young people aware of the origins of violence and of the need for rules limiting violence in all situations. The programme’s textbooks use extracts from national literature and culture as an effective vehicle for conveying the humanitarian message.

As in the past, cooperation with the region’s National Societies mostly comprised support and training to bolster their operational capacity in the areas of tracing, dissemination and relief and to promote their long-term structural development and independence.

The ICRC continued to put pressure on the Chechen and federal authorities to provide information on the investigation opened following the tragedy of Novye Atagi, where six of its delegates were murdered in 1996. Sadly, representations made by the ICRC and the delegates’ States of origin yielded no results. In 1998, security continued to be a constant concern. However, in view of the immense humanitarian needs and the fact that few other organizations were active in the region, the ICRC pursued an ambitious and extensive programme in restrictive working conditions which are unlikely to improve as long as no political solutions are in sight.
the first timid signs of economic growth witnessed in some of the countries covered by the Kyiv regional delegation at the beginning of 1998 suffered a severe setback with the effects of the Russian financial crisis in August. Living conditions for much of the population became even more difficult than before. In addition, minority issues were a constant source of tension throughout the region. Six years after fighting had broken out in Moldova, the situation remained deadlocked, despite the 1997 Normalization Memorandum which provided for a return to normal relations between the parties on the basis of a common State and autonomous status for the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr. The document was further endorsed by a meeting of the Presidents of Russia, Ukraine and Moldova in Odessa, Ukraine, in March 1998. These developments did not, however, yield any tangible results on the ground. For its part, the ICRC kept up its efforts to regain access to the four members of the "Ilascu group" held since 1992 in Tiraspol, in the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr. The detainees were last visited in 1993/4. Throughout the year, the ICRC was unable to meet with the Minister of State Security of the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr.

The delegation continued to provide advice and technical support for the incorporation of international humanitarian law in national legislation and the adoption of measures to protect the red cross emblem. To this end, the delegation met regularly with the national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law in Belarus and Moldova and, in countries where such committees had not yet been set up, with State officials and working groups on implementation, to chart their progress and make recommendations. In addition, the ICRC produced commentaries on the new or amended penal codes of the Baltic States, Moldova and Ukraine in the light of international law, and submitted them to the authorities. These five countries also received financial support from the ICRC Advisory Service to conduct their own studies on the state of national legislation in relation to humanitarian law. Seminars were held and presentations given in all countries as a means of promoting implementation. Of particular note was a first high-level seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law held in Estonia in cooperation with the authorities. Those countries that had not yet done so (the
Baltic States and Ukraine) were encouraged to create national committees to coordinate government activities in the field of implementation.

The Kyiv regional delegation pursued its efforts to see the law of armed conflict included in teaching and training programmes at all levels of the armed forces. Under cooperation agreements signed at the beginning of the year between the ICRC and the Defence Ministries of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, a number of seminars and presentations were organized to help the armed forces incorporate the subject into daily instruction and combat training. In Belarus, the ICRC gave presentations on the law of armed conflict to border guards, Interior Ministry troops and officers of the security services. A training course was organized for field instructors at the Military Academy. In Ukraine, the ICRC established contact with the Ukrainian Army in the Crimea, the Ukrainian Naval Forces and the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol to offer its assistance in promoting and teaching the law of armed conflict. Two high-ranking Ministry of Defence officers from Moldova and Ukraine respectively took part in the second Russian-language course on the law of armed conflict held at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy. In the Baltic States, the ICRC presented programmes for incorporating the law of armed conflict into regular military training to the Ministries of Defence.

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 and dissemination. The ICRC also assisted in the preparation and publication of the National Societies' internal bulletins, so as to enhance contact between local branches and headquarters, and to spread basic knowledge of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law. In all the countries covered, dissemination seminars on the Red Cross and humanitarian law also served to make the local authorities aware of the role the Red Cross can play in providing useful community services.

Throughout the region, the ICRC pursued its efforts to have humanitarian law included in all academic courses on international law, and, as a second step, to set up specialized courses in humanitarian law at selected universities. To that end, the ICRC provided training and support for several professors of international law.

The ICRC continued to provide material and technical support for Ukrainian Red Cross relief activities in Crimea, where the social and economic situation remained very precarious. The Crimean branch distributed food parcels, clothes and shoes to the most vulnerable and handed medical supplies over to the 80 Red Cross nurses who regularly visited elderly and disabled persons in their homes and provided them with basic medical care and food parcels. In April the Ukrainian Red Cross, with ICRC support, initiated a new programme to set up
first-aid centres in settlements for "formerly deported people". By the end of the year, seven such centres were in operation with 12 more planned, and 18 medical kits had been distributed to their staff. The ICRC provided some of the material for distribution, and assisted the Crimean branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross in assessing the needs of the population and in organizing surveys, reporting and logistics.

3 Mainly Tatar communities who had been deported to Central Asia at the end of the Second World War.

IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- continued to request access to the 4 members of the "Ilascu group" detained since 1992 in Tiraspol, in the self-proclaimed Moldovan Republic of Dniestr;
- provided 20 tonnes of clothes, a computer and a minibus to the Crimean branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross, which supports some 17,000 vulnerable individuals;
- provided equipment and basic medicines for the 80 Red Cross visiting nurses, who visited 10,000 people at home and dispensed medical and social services to a further 15,000 persons on Crimean Red Cross premises;
- provided assistance and held workshops on humanitarian law at the newly established first-aid centres in settlements for former deportees in the Crimea;
- provided extensive training for Latvian and Lithuanian dissemination officers at the Kyiv delegation;
- supported Latvia's first country-wide dissemination seminar for Red Cross workers, organized by the National Society;
- held 5 dissemination seminars for Red Cross staff and volunteers at regional branches in Belarus, 4 in Ukraine, and 3 in Moldova (in Chisinau, Komrat and Tiraspol);
- worked with the Ukrainian Red Cross tracing service to harmonize its activities with the Belarusian and Moldovan tracing services;
- funded National Society publications: the Ukrainian Red Cross bulletin (3,000 copies), the Belarus Red Cross quarterly newsletter (5,000 copies), and dissemination material produced by the Latvian and Estonian National Societies;
- financed the production of 10,000 pocket calendars to promote the Crimean branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross.
- arranged for two government representatives from Belarus and Ukraine respectively to take part in the first seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law organized for CIS countries by the ICRC in Moscow;
- gave presentations on the incorporation of humanitarian law in national law at seminars for members of the national committees for implementation in Moldova and Belarus, and at a conference on implementation in Ukraine;
- drew up commentaries on draft laws on the National Societies of the Baltic States and Ukraine regarding the use and protection of the red cross emblem;
- supported the first issues of "Justice of Belarus", the first comprehensive legal journal to be published in Belarus, which also discusses humanitarian law questions;
- in Moldova, gave a presentation on the law of armed conflict for 30 officers from Ministry of Defence troops and from units deployed in Chisinau; supported 4 seminars organized by the Ministry of Defence for over 90 military officers from 2 infantry brigades, Chisinau Military College, the Moldovan Peace-Keeping Forces, and the Russian and Transnistrian Peace-Keeping Forces;
- in Ukraine, gave a presentation on the law of armed conflict for 300 officers at Kyiv Army Institute, and held standard 2-day seminars reaching 80 military officers jointly with the Ministry of Defence;
- in Belarus, held 5 training sessions on the law of armed conflict for 249 military officers, and produced working documents on the law of armed conflict for military instructors;
- arranged for several high-ranking Ukrainian officers to participate in the fourth international course on the law of armed conflict organized by the ICRC Moscow delegation, and in the third ICRC Conference for Heads of Military Training in Geneva;
- in Belarus, worked with national experts in preparing the first humanitarian law textbook for university students;
- arranged for teams of university students from Belarus and Moldova to participate in the ICRC-organized De Martens moot court competition in St Petersburg;
- jointly with the Red Cross Society of Belarus, organized the first seminar on humanitarian law and Red Cross topics for media representatives in Minsk;
- jointly with the Ukrainian and Belarusian National Societies, brought the photo exhibition People and War to Kyiv (2,500 visitors) and Minsk (7,000 visitors);
- provided financial support for one representative of the Ministry of Defence and one of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from every country covered to take part in the anti-personnel landmines conference held in Budapest for countries of Central and Eastern Europe.
MOSCOW
Regional delegation
(Russian Federation, with specialized services for all countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia)

In 1998, the situation remained bleak throughout the Russian Federation, with the majority of the population experiencing increased economic and social hardship. This was exacerbated by the financial crisis of August 1998, which caused rampant inflation and further sapped the confidence of investors and small savers. Over the year little or no progress was made towards resolving the conflicts in the northern Caucasus. More than two years after the end of hostilities in Chechnya, negotiations regarding the separatist republic's future status remained deadlocked, leaving it in virtual political and economic isolation. Six years after the conflict between Ingushetia and North Ossetia came to an end, thousands of people have still not been able to return to their homes in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia. The frustration caused by this stagnation led to a marked deterioration in the security situation in the region, particularly in the north-eastern Caucasus, with irregular armed groups pursuing conflicting goals. Tougher law-enforcement measures imposed by the local and federal authorities had limited impact: Moscow sent more troops to the region, but no military action was taken.

The Moscow regional delegation continued to provide the Russian Federation and the newly independent States with advice and assistance in their efforts to implement international humanitarian law. The delegation carried out numerous missions to the newly independent States, prepared commentaries on draft laws, and encouraged governments to establish national committees for the implementation of humanitarian law. In addition, the ICRC Advisory Service conducted studies on the legislation of all the successor States where the ICRC is present in the light of humanitarian law, and made recommendations accordingly. A first seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law for CIS* countries was attended by two high-ranking officials from Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine respectively.

The ICRC continued to concentrate on disseminating the principles of humanitarian law and on spreading knowledge among the public at large of the ICRC's specific mandate and its role within the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, as Russian society at all levels remained insufficiently informed in this regard.

As in previous years, support was given to national efforts to incorporate the law of armed conflict in the training, instruction and combat procedures of the armed forces. The ICRC focused on informing and training the command and

* Commonwealth of Independent States
teaching staff of military academies, in accordance with cooperation agreements signed with the Russian Ministries of the Interior and Defence. Under separate cooperation programmes with Moscow Military University and the command of the northern Caucasus military district, further dissemination sessions were held. A seminar on the teaching of human rights and humanitarian law to police forces, held in Volgograd, was attended by representatives of training institutions run by the Ministries of the Interior of the Russian Federation and other CIS countries. Given their specific role and the current situation in the Russian Federation, the police are a target audience of primary importance.

As part of its comprehensive strategy to promote the teaching of humanitarian law at university level, the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement with the Russian Education Ministry departments responsible for setting academic standards and drawing up programmes. This agreement provided for the incorporation of humanitarian law in standard curricula for the social sciences and journalism. Throughout the year, the ICRC was invited to take part in humanitarian law courses for university lecturers and in academic conferences across the CIS. To stimulate the interest of professors and students, the ICRC held the second De Martens moot court competition on humanitarian law in St Petersburg, which drew participants from 13 law faculties in the CIS region, representing 11 countries.

The ICRC’s vast schools programme, now in its fourth year, is designed to familiarize secondary school students in the Russian Federation with the basic principles underlying both international humanitarian law and the mandate and activities of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. A survey showed that in 1998, fully 66 percent of fifth graders were studying the ICRC textbook, which had been formally introduced two years previously. The trial phase of the sixth-grade textbook was completed, in preparation for its introduction in 1999, and work began on one for the seventh grade.

The travelling exhibition entitled *People and War,* which comprised 140 photos from ICRC archives spanning the period from 1859 to 1996, continued its tour of Russian cities, including Volgograd, Astrakhan, Omsk, and Vladivostok. The exhibition, intended to promote understanding of humanitarian law and knowledge of Red Cross activities for war victims, drew thousands of visitors, among them high-ranking representatives of the authorities and the armed forces and children taking part in the ICRC schools programme. Media coverage and round-table discussions further enhanced its impact.

As in the past, cooperation with the Russian Red Cross Society concentrated on two main areas: operational support for Red Cross branches in the northern Caucasus, including the districts of Stavropol and Krasnodar, and material

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4 See the ICRC’s *1997 Annual Report*, pp. 210-212.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- enabled 13 senior Defence Ministry officials from nine newly independent states to take part in the second Russian-language humanitarian law course in San Remo, Italy;
- organized 46 seminars for 5,000 members of the armed forces and police throughout the Russian Federation;
- financed the publication of a manual on the law of armed conflict in English and Russian, and distributed 3,000 copies to military academies;
- under the schools programme, held 15 seminars to train teachers in the use of the ICRC textbooks; distributed 7,000 copies of the second experimental sixth-grade textbook;
- took part in 13 regional academic conferences on human rights, humanitarian law and conflict resolution across the Russian Federation;
- brought the travelling exhibition People and War to 4 cities, attracting some 23,000 visitors;
- held seminars on the implementation of humanitarian law for representatives of the authorities, federal institutions, members of parliament and the Russian Red Cross;
- submitted comments on the draft federal law "On the Russian Red Cross Society and the Use of the Emblem of the Red Cross in the Russian Federation";
Northern Caucasus

Mounting internal tensions and rampant banditry in many of the northern Caucasus republics continued to destabilize the entire region. In Chechnya in particular the situation went from bad to worse, with abductions and brutal killings, an assassination attempt on the President, repeated government reshuffles, and religious tensions leading to bloody clashes. Meanwhile, in the Prigorodny district of North Ossetia, outbreaks of violence involving looting and the burning of buildings further delayed the already difficult process of arranging for the return of the displaced Ingush population, despite concerted efforts on the part of the authorities of the republics of Ingushetia and North Ossetia and of the Federal government. The situation on the Dagestani-Chechen border was equally volatile, with weekly reports of raids, shoot-outs and abductions of civilians and militiamen. In Dagestan itself, armed groups openly defied the government in the capital Makhachkala, and clashed with Dagestani Interior Ministry troops in the Buynaksk region. In the summer, the Mayor of Makhachkala survived a bomb attack which left 18 dead and over 80 wounded.

Given this deteriorating security environment, the ICRC continued to rule out a permanent expatriate presence in Chechnya, Daghestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia, having withdrawn from the region in 1996 following the murder of six delegates at the Novye Atagi field hospital. The Nalchik sub-delegation (Kabardino-Balkaria) continued to supervise and coordinate the programmes carried out by local ICRC staff in cooperation with the local Red Cross committees. Delegates conducted weekly one-day visits to Vladikavkaz (North Ossetia), and sporadic missions to Chechnya, Daghestan and Ingushetia, to keep track of the situation and humanitarian needs and to monitor ongoing ICRC activities.

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5 See the ICRC's 1996 Annual Report, p. 198.
Cooperation programmes were initiated in the republic of Kalmykia in January, and in May the ICRC opened an office in Stavropol to serve as a base for carrying out programmes in Adygea and Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya, and in Stavropol and Krasnodar districts. When humanitarian needs arose as a result of natural disasters, the ICRC also provided some emergency assistance in cooperation with the other humanitarian agencies involved.

The ICRC kept up its efforts to ascertain the fate of prisoners visited by the ICRC during the Chechen conflict by submitting names to the authorities and informing the families accordingly. With the assistance of the local Red Cross committee, the ICRC continued to forward Red Cross messages to and from Chechnya, where normal communications were still severely disrupted.

In view of the recent conflicts and the prevailing instability in the region, the ICRC attached great importance to fostering public awareness of the Geneva Conventions and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and gaining widespread acceptance of the ICRC's work and personnel. A particular effort was made to develop contacts with the media. Articles and interviews on Red Cross activities and the law of armed conflict appeared in the military press and regional newspapers and programmes on the subject were broadcast on State radio and TV.

At the beginning of the year, an agreement aimed at promoting the law of armed conflict among all army units stationed in the region was signed by the commander of the northern Caucasus military district and the head of the Nalchik sub-delegation. The agreement provided for army officers and troops to attend presentations on Red Cross principles and activities and on basic rules of the law of armed conflict. Presentations were given to units of the Ministries of the Interior and Defence stationed in Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia and Kalmykia, and in Stavropol and Krasnodar districts.

As in the rest of the Russian Federation, the schools programme continued. Delegates visited schools throughout the region, meeting Ministry of Education representatives and regional coordinators to chart the progress of the programme.

To help medical facilities meet the needs of the population, the ICRC made substantial ad hoc deliveries of medicines throughout the year. Hospitals in Grozny continued to receive medicines on the same basis, while emergency medical supplies were delivered to Daghestan after clashes in Makhachkala and again in the summer to help control outbreaks of typhoid and cholera. In Kabardino-Balkaria, the ICRC supplied hospital kits to a medical centre for internally displaced people from Chechnya and to the Republican Hospital in Nalchik.

The fully renovated blood transfusion centre in Grozny was equipped and furnished before finally opening in the summer. The first statistics showed that approximately 350 donors were giving blood every month. The delegation continued to support the blood bank by providing medical supplies.
- delivered 241 Red Cross messages from Chechnya to destinations mainly in the CIS, and forwarded 150 to Chechnya for distribution by the local Red Cross;

- contributed 545 tonnes of relief (comprising 1 food parcel, 1 hygiene kit and 5 kg of wheat flour per person) to the social welfare programmes of the 8 republican committees of the Russian Red Cross Society, for monthly distributions to over 3,000 vulnerable people;

- in Ingushetia, regularly provided urgently needed assistance (jerrycans, kerosene stoves, blankets and candles) for 2,310 internally displaced persons living in camps and for needy local inhabitants in remote mountain villages;

- distributed, on a one-off basis, food parcels, hygiene kits and blankets to 150 Ingush families forced to flee from an outbreak of violence in the Prigorodny district in September;

- regularly distributed food parcels, hygiene kits and wheat flour to 314 internally displaced persons from Chechnya housed in sanatoriums in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria;

- carried out one-off food and non-food distributions for the victims of floods in Krasnodar district (which affected some 4,200 families) and in Stavropol district (providing 380 food parcels and 979 non-food kits for about 1,300 families), and for landslide victims in Chechnya;

- in Adygea, provided 200 families with gas and kerosene stoves, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, food parcels and blankets after heavy spring rain caused severe damage;

- in Chechnya, under the bread programme, supplied 889 tonnes of wheat flour, enabling 10,500 beneficiaries to collect 12 loaves of bread per month from state bakeries;

- delivered ad hoc and emergency medical supplies to 8 hospitals in Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria and Daghestan;

- supported the visiting nurses programme, run by local Red Cross committees, under which 2,020 beneficiaries received home care from 155 nurses;

- provided large quantities of testing material and blood bags for the blood bank in Grozny;

- provided basic equipment such as tools, pumps and spare parts to the Grozny water board to help it maintain the sewage system;

- serviced 6 tanker trucks donated in 1997 to Grozny district administrations at the ICRC workshop in Nalchik;

- provided 15 submersible pumps and distributed chlorine to disinfect water reservoirs in villages around Khasavyurt, Daghestan;

- organized a 2-week training seminar at the new ICRC office in Stavropol to familiarize local employees with the ICRC, the red cross emblem and humanitarian law;

- provided home-care training for 30 nurses working in the visiting nurses programme, and trained 16 nurses as instructors in basic home care;

- gave 30 presentations on the ICRC and humanitarian law to 1,300 officers and soldiers of the Interior and Defence Ministries stationed in Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria, North Ossetia, Prigorodny, Vladikavkaz, and Kalmykia, and in Stavropol and Krasnodar districts;

- organized an exhibition entitled *Humanity and War* in Elista, Kalmykia, which attracted over 2,500 visitors, following which presentations on humanitarian law were given to schoolchildren and university students, soldiers and officers.
Throughout the region, the situation of elderly and internally displaced people remained extremely precarious, owing to the breakdown of the social system and the irregular payment of retirement pensions. The ICRC continued to provide financial and material support for the visiting nurses programme managed by local branches of the Russian Red Cross in eight republics of the Northern Caucasus. Under the programme, elderly and housebound people are visited in their homes by nurses dispensing medical care, hot meals and food parcels. Thirty nurses selected from all ten Red Cross branches in the northern Caucasus and southern Russia received intensive training in basic home care and first aid. Sixteen of them were chosen to receive further training as instructors.

The ICRC continued to support the social welfare programmes of the eight republican committees of the Russian Red Cross, which in 1998 provided 3,239 vulnerable people with monthly food and non-food supplies. Krasnodar and Stavropol districts received assistance every three months (4,800 beneficiaries). Other regular and ad hoc distributions were made to the needy, to landslide and flood victims and to internally displaced persons throughout the region.

In Chechnya, where the situation of vulnerable groups in urban areas remained particularly difficult, the ICRC, in cooperation with the Chechen Red Cross, continued to provide 10,500 local residents with 12 loaves of bread per month.\(^6\)

Water-supply and sewage systems remained in a dire state in many towns and villages in Chechnya, in particular in Grozny. Water was still being distributed by private tanker trucks, plus the six trucks which the ICRC had donated to the district administrations in 1997. The ICRC continued to maintain production at Grozny's main pumping station. In Daghestan, the ICRC delivered 15 submersible pumps which were installed in the villages around Khasavyurt, significantly reducing the risk of water-borne diseases in the area. As in 1997, chlorine was distributed to disinfect water reservoirs in these villages and in camps for internally displaced people in the Khasavyurt area.

At the end of April, the ICRC launched an information campaign to prevent cholera in Chechnya and Daghestan, as it had in summer 1997. A TV spot was broadcast, and posters and leaflets were displayed in hospitals and other public places.

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\(^6\) See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, p. 218.
In 1998, Armenia and Azerbaijan were still in the throes of economic and political transition, begun after the break-up of the Soviet Union. In Armenia, economic growth was stifled by a lack of foreign investment and by the trade embargo imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey because of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. Meanwhile, the potential exploitation of the oil wealth of the Caspian Sea, which was expected to boost Azerbaijan’s economy, had not yet begun to fulfil its promise of national prosperity. During the year, political crises led to the fall of the Armenian government, while presidential elections in Azerbaijan were denounced as fraudulent by the opposition. In Armenia, attacks on political leaders and the assassination of public figures such as the Prosecutor General contributed to the general climate of insecurity.

Against this backdrop of political and economic instability, the Nagorny Karabakh conflict remained deadlocked. Although the parties continued to be committed to the 1994 cease-fire agreement, intermittent shelling and firing and numerous casualties were reported from both sides of the northern border between Armenia and Azerbaijan and along the cease-fire lines in the Karabakh region. Despite diplomatic efforts by the OSCE* Minsk group, the parties did not waver from their respective positions. Four years after the end of hostilities, the need for emergency assistance was superseded by rehabilitation and development requirements. The ICRC accordingly scaled down its assistance activities and concentrated on restoring food security to communities affected by the conflict and building local capacities.

* OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
In Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC continued to visit 27 persons detained in connection with the conflict to assess their living conditions and treatment. As in past years, all detainees visited were given the opportunity of exchanging Red Cross messages with their families. Despite continued negotiations between the parties to the conflict, held under the aegis of the OSCE, there was no comprehensive release of detainees. However, during the year, six persons regularly visited by the ICRC were released and returned to their families in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, with ICRC assistance.

In Armenia and Nagorny Karabakh the ICRC had access to the entire prison population (around 6,500 in Armenia and under 200 in Nagorny Karabakh), including security detainees and common law detainees. In Azerbaijan, negotiations with authorities for access to all detainees yielded no results.

The flow of Red Cross messages between family members separated by the conflict dwindled over the year with the resumption of normal postal services between Nagorny Karabakh and the outside world. Most of the messages handled by the ICRC were exchanged between detainees and their families. Red Cross messages remained a vital link for detainees and for separated relatives.

Although large-scale conflict ended in May 1994 with the signing of the ceasefire agreement, the ICRC received 170 new tracing requests from families still searching for relatives who had gone missing either before 1994 or in subsequent front-line incidents. After lengthy negotiations between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, the mortal remains of four soldiers killed in front-line incidents in 1997 were finally exchanged under ICRC supervision.

The tuberculosis (TB) treatment programme run by the ICRC at the prison hospital in Baku was given a considerable boost by the signing of a tripartite cooperation agreement, after lengthy negotiations, between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and the ICRC, defining the respective responsibilities of each in ensuring the implementation of a TB programme in accordance with WHO* guidelines. Under the agreement, Penal Colony No. 3 was turned into a "TB zone", and DOTS* was adopted as the sole form of treatment. The ICRC was assigned responsibility for the quality of the treatment, for provision of technical assistance to facilitate proper implementation of WHO procedures, and for exercising strict control over the use of the TB medicines it provided. The colony was renovated and opened in July, and subsequently the number of patients being treated increased fourfold. The cumulative mortality and abandonment rates remained stable at 10.4% and 11.9% respectively. During the year 443 patients

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* WHO: World Health Organization
* DOTS: Directly observed treatment, short course strategy
were included in the programme, 369 of them after the opening of Colony No. 3. Nearly a thousand patients have been admitted since the programme began in June 1995.

The ICRC prosthetic/orthotic centre for war amputees in Baku, run in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, continued to fit patients with prostheses and orthoses and to provide crutches free of charge. During their treatment, the amputees were accommodated in an ICRC-run dormitory. In January, a formal two-year training course began for 16 prospective prosthetic/orthotic technicians from different parts of Azerbaijan.

The number of war casualties steadily decreased after the cease-fire of 1994 and has remained stable over the past two years. Following an evaluation of the assistance requirements of the five military hospitals treating the war-wounded, it was decided to end all surgical assistance to these facilities in August 1998, as the authorities were now in a position to provide the necessary supplies. The ICRC continued to facilitate the referral of amputees from front-line districts to its rehabilitation centre in Baku.

To prevent shortages of essential medical and surgical supplies in Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC visited and distributed assistance to hospitals treating landmine victims and other war-casualties, and civilian medical facilities in remote areas. A health delegate visited each facility and held informal training sessions on common health problems.

In view of the gradually improving situation, the need for humanitarian assistance declined during the year and focus was placed instead on restoring the population's self-sufficiency. In Armenia, the German Red Cross replaced the American Red Cross in February in running the delegated assistance project covering 16 villages and one town in the north-eastern border region, while in Azerbaijan, some 5,300 beneficiaries in the eight front-line districts received ICRC/American Red Cross assistance. The ICRC continued to help 43 villages in Nagorny Karabakh. In all three areas, the last bulk food distributions were made in spring. At the same time, seed potatoes, wheat seed and vegetable seed kits were distributed to farmers in order to increase agricultural production. Furthermore, seed multiplication programmes were carried out so as to make good-quality seed more widely available in the region and to spread knowledge of multiplication techniques. After the harvest, a quarter of the seed potato yield was returned to the ICRC for future distribution and one fifth was distributed to families in the villages.

These projects helped restore a degree of food security, although the potato and wheat harvests suffered as a result of drought. In Nagorny Karabakh in particular, a one-off flour distribution had to be carried out in five villages before the winter. A spare parts programme for agricultural machinery in Nagorny Karabakh enabled the farmers to increase the area cultivated and the yield per
water for front-line districts and Nagorno Karabakh

food and non-food assistance for kindergartens

assistance to primary and secondary schools

implementation of humanitarian law

promoting humanitarian law among the armed forces

The population in the villages receiving ICRC assistance increased by 1.3 per cent, mainly owing to the return of ex-refugees from Armenia and Russia.

As part of the comprehensive strategy to restore self-sufficiency to the population, water and sanitation work continued in nine villages in Nagorno Karabakh, with the aim of ensuring that villages directly affected by the conflict had sufficient water for household and irrigation purposes. As planned, the projects were completed in November and the remaining material was handed over to the water board. The ICRC cooperated closely with Médecins sans frontières Belgium which was initiating a water and sanitation project in Nagorno Karabakh along the lines of the ICRC programme.

The ICRC and the German Red Cross kept up deliveries of supplementary food and other items to 14 kindergartens receiving 700 children in the northeastern border region of Armenia. This helped ensure the survival of the kindergartens, as well as lightening the financial burden for the villages and families concerned. Furthermore the ICRC, in cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross Society and the villagers, renovated six more kindergartens in the villages most severely affected by the conflict in the north-east. By the end of the year, over 300 children were attending these kindergartens in salubrious conditions.

Repairs on eight schools in the four northern front-line districts in Azerbaijan, which began in 1997, were completed with the support of local communities. The children were able to resume their education in optimum conditions in September 1998. School kits, winter coats and boots were also distributed to needy families in the front-line districts of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and in Nagorny Karabakh.

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, the commissions in charge of drawing up the new penal and penal procedure codes received comments and recommendations from the ICRC Advisory Service relating to the incorporation of international humanitarian law. In Armenia, the ICRC gave a number of presentations and held seminars on the implementation of humanitarian law for Ministry of Justice officials.

The Armenian Ministry of Defence continued its cooperation programme with the ICRC in 1998, on the basis of a new long-term concept of cooperation. The main objectives pursued in 1998 were to increase awareness of the law of armed conflict, to make it a compulsory subject in teaching and training programmes, and to provide appropriate training for instructors.

Contacts with the Azeri Ministry of Defence were maintained, in particular following participation of the Chief of Operations of the Azeri Ministry of Defence at the 68th course on the law of armed conflict at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, San Remo. A liaison officer for the promotion of this body of law among the armed forces was appointed by the Ministry of the Interior. As a result of these developments, a number of seminars on the law of armed conflict

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were held for officers and instructors at military schools, and presentations were given for troops.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC conducted a one-day seminar for about 60 officers of the Karabakhi army and distributed dissemination material to four military units.

In Armenia two universities were offering humanitarian law as a separate subject in their curriculum by the end of the year and eight universities were offering some hours on humanitarian law as part of other courses. During the year the ICRC gave presentations on humanitarian law at conferences on human rights and humanitarian law organized for lawyers, teachers and students across Armenia.

Contacts were also maintained with universities and other academic institutions in Azerbaijan, where humanitarian law was already being taught at Baku State University. The ICRC gave presentations on humanitarian law at seven institutes and faculties in Baku, reaching some 200 students and lecturers. Two people from Azerbaijan attended the humanitarian law course in Tashkent and subsequently returned to teach humanitarian law at Baku State University. Throughout the year, several courses focusing specifically on humanitarian law were introduced at a number of academic institutions.

In Nagorny Karabakh, the ICRC gave presentations on humanitarian law and ICRC activities at five universities.

Under agreements with the respective Ministries of Education, a new textbook for sixth-grade schoolchildren introducing the basic principles of humanitarian law was prepared during the year. An evaluation of the fifth-grade textbook, which had already been distributed in schools in 1997, revealed positive results. A series of teacher-training seminars was held on the use of the textbooks.

The ICRC's first mine-awareness programme in the Caucasus, begun in 1997 and carried out in the form of a project delegated to the Swedish Red Cross, continued with support from the Azeri authorities. The programme alerted over 500,000 displaced persons and residents of front-line areas to the danger of landmines and unexploded ordnance. Mine-awareness training sessions were held for teachers, schoolchildren and community leaders, who also received related material for distribution. In addition, the ICRC chaired and played a coordinating role in monthly meetings of UN agencies and NGOs on mine action.

The ICRC continued to provide financial and technical support for the tracing and dissemination departments of the Armenian Red Cross and the Red Crescent Society of Azerbaijan, and cooperated with them in relief projects.

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7 See the ICRC's 1997 Annual Report, p. 221.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, regularly visited 27 people detained in connection with the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, and transferred 6 released detainees to Armenia, Azerbaijan or Russia;
- in Armenia, conducted comprehensive visits to 10 places of detention and regularly visited 29 security and common law detainees;
- in Nagorny Karabakh, conducted comprehensive visits to 2 prisons and supplied basic medicines, dressing materials, books and clothing;
- provided treatment for 443 patients enrolled in the ICRC-run tuberculosis treatment programme for detainees at the prison hospital in Baku;
- collected 1,588 Red Cross messages and distributed 1,464 between detainees and their families and between relatives separated by the conflict;
- collected 170 tracing requests from families of missing persons;
- supervised the exchange of the mortal remains of 4 Azeri and Armenian soldiers;

- in Armenia, by means of a project delegated to the German Red Cross, distributed 192 tonnes of cereals, 43.6 tonnes of vegetable oil, 50 tonnes of sugar, and 49,000 jar lids to some 9,400 families (about 29,000 people) living in 16 villages and 1 town along the north-eastern border with Azerbaijan;
- under the agronomy programme in Armenia, distributed 297 tonnes of seed potatoes and 3 tonnes of fertilizer and pesticides;
- in Nagorny Karabakh, distributed some 320 tonnes of wheat flour, 45 tonnes of vegetable oil, 143 tonnes of sugar and 84,000 jar lids to the 41 villages most severely affected by the conflict;
- under the agronomy programme in Nagorny Karabakh, distributed some 72 tonnes of seed potatoes, 20 tonnes of wheat seed, 5,507 vegetable seed kits and 68 tonnes of fertilizers and pesticides;
- provided spare parts for the repair of 14 combine harvesters, 21 caterpillar tractors, 6 ploughs and 2 mills in the 41 villages supported by the ICRC in Nagorny Karabakh;
- in the front-line districts of Azerbaijan, by means of a project delegated to the American Red Cross, provided some 9,500 vulnerable families with over 270 tonnes of food and 16 tonnes of other supplies; under the agronomy programme, distributed 291 tonnes of seed potatoes and 9,242 seed kits;
- jointly with the German Red Cross, supplied 750 children at 14 kindergartens with food, teaching materials and clothes in Armenia; supplied stationery kits to 20 Armenian schools with 5,215 pupils;
- in cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross, supplied 3,167 of the most needy adults and children in 14 north-eastern border villages with new jackets and boots;
- distributed stationery to 1,791 pupils from the most vulnerable villages previously assisted by the ICRC in Nagorny Karabakh;
- rehabilitated 22 schools in Azerbaijan;
- provided medical material for 10 military and civilian health facilities treating the warwounded in Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh and essential supplies for civilian dispensaries in Nagorny Karabakh;
- in Baku, manufactured 318 prostheses, including 52 for mine victims, and 118 orthoses; fitted 190 new amputees with prostheses and 79 new patients with orthoses;
- manufactured 995 pairs of crutches for the State-run prosthetic/orthotic centre in Baku and the recently opened centre in Dushanbe, Tajikistan;
- in Nagorno Karabakh, restored the water supply for 4,000 people in 15 villages; distributed gas welding machines and arranged for 1-3 people per village to follow maintenance and repair courses given by welders;
- held regular working meetings on tracing methods with the head of the Azeri Red Crescent tracing department;
- trained 2 new staff members of the Azeri Red Crescent to work as regional dissemination officers;
- financed the renovation and extension of Azeri Red Crescent Society headquarters in Baku;
- together with the Armenian Red Cross, organized 2 training seminars for branch managers and regional dissemination officers;
- in Armenia, conducted 2 seminars for 20 officers from the military academy and air-force instruction centre respectively;
- enabled a senior officer of the armed forces of Azerbaijan to take part in the 68th San Remo course on the law of armed conflict, and another officer to participate in the fourth international course on the law of armed conflict in Moscow;
- gave presentations on the law of armed conflict for the troops of the Ministry of the Interior of Azerbaijan;
- in Nagorno Karabakh, held a 1-day seminar for about 60 officers of the Karabakhi army, and distributed materials on the law of armed conflict to 4 military units;
- held training seminars for over 1,000 teachers on the use of the schools programme textbooks in Armenia and Azerbaijan;
- in Azerbaijan, published and distributed 7,300 copies of the 5th-grade textbook for schools in Nakhichevan; in Armenia, reprinted 8,000 copies of the 5th-grade textbook in response to the unforeseen return of Armenian families from the crisis-stricken Russian Federation;
- in Armenia, gave presentations at 31 conferences on human rights and humanitarian law attended by over 500 lawyers, teachers and students;
- gave presentations and held courses on humanitarian law at 10 institutes and faculties in Baku, reaching over 200 students and lecturers;
- arranged for 2 lecturers from Baku State University to attend the humanitarian law course in Tashkent;
- enabled a team of students from the law faculties of Yerevan and Baku State Universities to take part in the ICRC-organized De Martens humanitarian law moot court competition in St Petersburg;
- in Nagorno Karabakh, gave presentations on humanitarian law and ICRC activities in the region at five universities, with 213 participants;
- in Armenia, held a seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law, organized jointly with the Armenian National Assembly State Legal Commission, and gave a presentation about the ICRC and humanitarian law to Ministry of Justice officials;
- arranged for 2 Armenian prosecutors to take part in the ICRC seminar on national implementation of humanitarian law in Moscow;
- printed the Armenian and Azeri translations of the Geneva Conventions;
- showed the travelling photo exhibition People and War in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorny Karabakh to some 13,500 visitors;
- since the mine-awareness campaign was launched in October 1997, gave talks at 459 schools, trained 8,300 teachers and distributed 113,000 exercise books, 120,000 brochures and 6,800 posters.
In 1998 Georgia succeeded in consolidating its political and economic stability, notwithstanding a series of potentially disruptive events: the assassination attempt on the President, the taking hostage of four United Nations military observers near the front line with Abkhazia, and renewed fighting in the Gali region. Meanwhile, in Abkhazia, the economic embargo led to a sharp deterioration in living conditions and the collapse of the social welfare system. Security conditions remained tense owing to widespread crime and violence.

For the last four and a half years, Georgia and the breakaway region of Abkhazia had been trying to settle their differences at the negotiating table, but at the end of 1998 the situation remained deadlocked, despite the efforts of various international mediators to find a solution to the conflict. The main problems to be solved relate to the status of Abkhazia and to the future of some 250,000 people displaced from Abkhazia to Georgia following the fighting in 1993. In May 1998 violent clashes between Abkhaz forces and Georgian irregulars along the ceasefire line, in the Gali district, caused some 40,000 people to cross over to the Zugdidi region of western Georgia for safety. The clashes, the most serious recorded since the ceasefire was signed in May 1994, reflected rising frustration over the stalled peace process. Recent rounds of talks between the Georgian government and the Abkhaz authorities did not yield the expected results, and protocols on the return of internally displaced persons and on an economic programme for Abkhazia remain to be signed.

In 1998, the newly established Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law, comprising representatives of the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, human rights ombudsmen and members of the Georgian Red Cross Society, produced a report containing proposals and recommendations for amendments to Georgian legislation. In line with an ICRC
report on the subject submitted earlier in the year, the Committee's report recommended the inclusion of measures repressing breaches of humanitarian law in the future penal code (to be adopted in 1999), the adoption of appropriate measures for implementing the law on the red cross emblem (passed in October 1997), and the dissemination of humanitarian law.

In 1998, the ICRC again had access to all people detained in connection with the conflict or for security reasons in Georgia and in Abkhazia, and also to penal law offenders (a total of 10,000 detainees in Georgia, and 600 in Abkhazia). During the year, visits were conducted to all permanent and temporary places of detention in Georgia and Abkhazia, including police stations and the pre-trial detention centre of the Georgian Ministry of State Security.

The ICRC delivered ad hoc medical and material assistance to places of detention, and provided disabled detainees with prosthetic/orthotic services.

Under the family visits programme, launched in late 1996, the ICRC arranged for three detainees to be visited by their relatives, whom it provided with accommodation and transported across the front lines. Red Cross messages and family parcels were regularly exchanged between detainees and their families, providing detainees with substantial moral and material support.

The tuberculosis control project in the Georgian penitentiary system entered its second phase after a tripartite cooperation agreement was finally signed between the ICRC, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and the Ministry of Health. This phase began with an intensive one-week training seminar, organized by the ICRC and WHO, on the diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of TB patients, and the principles and implications of DOTS. The first TB-infected prisoners were subsequently admitted to the Xani penitentiary hospital outside Tbilisi. By the end of the year 316 patients were under treatment, with an average of 15 new patients every week. Systematic early detection of TB cases in prisons started in November 1998, and a health education campaign was launched for all patients under treatment. The ICRC provided technical assistance and materials for renovation work on the Xani penitentiary and for sanitation work to improve the water-supply and sewage systems.

At the beginning of the year the ICRC renewed its cooperation agreements with the health authorities for the duration of the internationally recognized two-year diploma courses for prosthetic/orthotic technicians, which started at the rehabilitation centres in Tbilisi (11 students) and Gagra (7 students) in February. The course includes practical training in producing artificial limbs, fitting patients, and theory classes. The students' newly acquired practical skills allowed both workshops to maintain a steady monthly output of lower-limb prostheses. Under the prosthetic/orthotic programme in places of detention, the five remaining amputee prisoners were fitted with prostheses. The fitting of amputees in the Gali region was suspended from May to November because of the hostilities.
Owing to the political and economic situation, the security environment in Abkhazia remained extremely volatile. The civilian population was subjected to acts such as looting, burning of homes and robbery. These incidents were generally of a criminal nature and not, to the ICRC's knowledge, specifically aimed at minorities. Minority groups nonetheless remained potentially more vulnerable than the general population and the ICRC continued to monitor their situation regularly and to report to the local and regional authorities when appropriate.

The ICRC continued to organize family reunifications involving transfers of people out of Abkhazia, mostly to Georgia. Requests for family reunification came mainly from single, elderly and frail people (the average age of the remaining Georgian population in Abkhazia is over 70), who found living alone too difficult.

The ICRC's Red Cross message network remained the only reliable means of written communication for people living in Abkhazia, with 56,385 messages being exchanged in the course of the year. Even though telephone lines were restored between Abkhazia and Georgia at the beginning of 1998, the Red Cross message system continued to play a vital role, enabling numerous families in Abkhazia to restore or maintain contact with relatives in Georgia or other countries of the CIS.

Relief programmes again focused on Abkhazia, whose regional economy remained paralysed by the blockade and structural and economic problems. ICRC food and non-food assistance continued for 50,000 beneficiaries in urban and rural areas. Although the entire population was affected, vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the disabled, orphans and large families were the hardest hit. Following two surveys conducted in 1997, efforts were made throughout the year to fine-tune and target dry food distributions more accurately.

The need for assistance in western Georgia increased in May because of the resumption of hostilities in the Gali district, which caused 30,000-40,000 people to seek refuge in the Zugdidi region. To meet immediate needs, the ICRC supplied food parcels and blankets from its emergency stocks in Tbilisi.

Under the agronomy programme in Abkhazia, which aims at restoring self-sufficiency to as much as the population as possible, seed distributions were carried out in rural areas, with technical advice provided by the ICRC's local agronomist. After the harvest, 6,300 beneficiaries in 16 rural villages no longer required food aid. The Finnish Red Cross community kitchens continued to provide hot meals for the most vulnerable members of the population throughout the country. As in 1997, three collective farms in Abkhazia received wheat seed, seed potatoes and fertilizer from the ICRC, which then purchased part of the yield for the community kitchens. Meanwhile, under the Swedish Red Cross home assistance programme, carried out in cooperation with local Red Cross branches, elderly housebound people throughout Abkhazia received meals and basic health care in their homes.
As in previous years, assistance continued for hospitals treating the displaced population and the war-wounded, including victims of landmine explosions in western Georgia and Abkhazia. In the second half of May, the ICRC stepped up medical and surgical supplies to all hospitals and diversified its activities in response to the renewed outbreak of fighting in the lower Gali region. Diagnostic equipment and drugs were supplied to mobile medical units set up by the Ministry of Health to cope with the influx of displaced people in South Zugdidi, as well as to health centres. The ICRC continued to support the surgical unit at the main polyclinic in Zugdidi, which serves some 60,000 internally displaced persons, in order to keep it prepared for future emergencies.

The ICRC also offered doctors at the polyclinic regular supervision and training in standard diagnostic procedures and treatment protocols, in accordance with WHO recommendations.

Because of the ongoing economic embargo on Abkhazia, many health facilities had no reliable sources of medical or surgical supplies and depended entirely on ICRC assistance. The ICRC continued to supply five hospitals with surgical material, increasing its deliveries during the crisis at the end of May. It also continued to provide three polyclinics and one dispensary in Sukhumi with essential medical supplies and to hold refresher seminars for doctors. A qualitative survey of primary health-care facilities early in the year showed that working conditions in the polyclinics were very poor and that the quantity of medicines supplied needed to be increased. After meetings with staff at the various polyclinics, it was agreed that members of vulnerable groups (mostly Russians and Georgians aged 60 and above) who had ID cards for the ICRC community kitchen programme or the ICRC home assistance programme and who could not afford to pay for health care, should receive free treatment. In March, the ICRC laboratory technician carried out a comprehensive evaluation of blood transfusion practices at the Sukhumi Blood Transfusion Service and six other hospitals.

After lengthy preparation, the textbook for seventh-grade pupils (aged 12-13) was printed in September and introduced in a trial phase in 26 schools in Tbilisi and the provinces. A survey showed that 89% of teachers in Georgia and Abkhazia had used or were using the textbook for sixth-graders, which had been introduced in 1996. Training seminars for teachers were held in Zugdidi and Sukhumi on the use of the sixth- and the forthcoming seventh-grade textbooks. At the request of the local authorities, and with the agreement of the Georgian Minister of Education, textbooks in Russian were introduced for sixth-grade pupils in South Ossetia.

The first full course on humanitarian law started for third-year law students at Tbilisi State University, and six classes on humanitarian law were held for fourth-year law students. The ICRC focused on preparing reference documentation in

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GEORGIA

Total expenditure in 1998:
Sfr 18,813,339

- Protection/tracing: 22.8%
- Relief: 4.7%
- Health activities: 8.3%
- Cooperation with the National Society: 0.7%
- Promotion/dissemination: 17.8%
- Operational support: 41.9%
- Overheads: 3.8%
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited 341 detainees (including 115 registered for the first time), of whom at least 196 are considered to be security detainees, in 35 places of detention run by the Georgian authorities; interviewed 40 former detainees to obtain further information about the living conditions and treatment in prisons;
- visited 61 detainees (including 37 registered for the first time), of whom at least 21 are security detainees, in 11 places of detention run by the Abkhaz authorities;
- arranged for 3 family visits to detainees across the front lines;
- together with the WHO, held a 1-week training seminar for prison medical staff involved in the tuberculosis control project;
- provided treatment for 215 patients enrolled in the ICRC-run tuberculosis treatment programme for detainees at Xani prison hospital, which began in June;
- forwarded 56,385 Red Cross messages;
- organized 42 family reunifications involving transfers of people from Abkhazia to Georgia, Russia and Ukraine;
- held training workshops on tracing for local Red Cross branches;
- provided some 33,000 beneficiaries in 11 towns and 18,000 in 57 villages with wheat flour, sugar, vegetable oil, yeast, soap and individual parcels every 2-3 months as needed;
- as part of the agronomy programme, distributed over 367 tonnes of seed potatoes, 19 tonnes of maize seed and 18,890 vegetable seed kits to 17,883 inhabitants of 57 Abkhaz villages;
- to help people build up reserves of food, supplied food preservation kits to 17,833 inhabitants in 57 Abkhaz villages;
- supplied 1,735 tonnes of food for the 23 canteens run by the Finnish Red Cross in Abkhazia, which provided 6,000 people with 1 hot meal per day (2,200 calories);
- distributed seed and fertilizer to 3 collective farms in Abkhazia, purchased part of their harvest and used it to supply the community kitchens;
- provided 14 schools in Abkhazia with 1,020 school kits, 600 pairs of boots, and jackets;
- helped 760 elderly housebound people in six regions of Abkhazia through the Swedish Red Cross home assistance programme;
- after the resumption of hostilities in the Gali region, distributed food parcels and blankets to 30,000 displaced people (7,000 families) around Zugdidi; provided 18,000 displaced people (4,350 families) with stoves, kitchen sets, jerry-cans, plastic sheeting and clothes;
- assisted 6 medical facilities which treated 528 war-wounded in western Georgia and Abkhazia;
- assisted 3 polyclinics and a dispensary in the Sukhumi district by providing medical supplies and enabling local health staff to carry out 110,126 outpatient consultations and home-care visits;
- held regular training workshops for doctors on standard diagnostic procedures and treatment protocols in accordance with WHO recommendations;
- carried out a comprehensive evaluation of blood transfusion practices at the Sukhumi Blood Transfusion Service and 6 other hospitals;
- in the Tbilisi and Gagra workshops, manufactured 670 prostheses, including 124 for mine victims, and fitted 354 amputees with artificial limbs;
- provided the Georgian Red Cross with technical and financial support for its tracing and dissemination activities;
- organized a 2-day seminar to bring National Society staff up to date on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and humanitarian law;
- submitted a report to the National Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law proposing amendments to Georgian legislation, including measures to repress violations of humanitarian law;
- held four presentations on humanitarian law for 65 Abkhaz officers and 40 soldiers;
- held information sessions for potential bearers of weapons, reaching 955 teenagers in their last years of compulsory schooling in Abkhazia and 265 in the Zugdidi region;
- distributed 1,000 textbooks for sixth-grade pupils in South Ossetia and organized teacher-training seminars;
- held dissemination sessions on the work of the ICRC for different target groups, including 230 medical personnel;
- held 12 dissemination sessions for national staff of the delegation in Tbilisi and in Zugdidi;
- showed the travelling photo exhibition People and War in five cities throughout Georgia and Abkhazia, attracting some 12,000 visitors;
- for the first time, organized monthly press briefings in cooperation with the Federation of Georgian Journalists;
- produced video clips and 7 short films on ICRC activities in Abkhazia, in cooperation with national television.
humanitarian law courses at universities

The ICRC established initial contacts with the university's journalism faculty with a view to introducing a course on humanitarian law. The ICRC delegates carried out dissemination sessions at the universities of Tskhinvali, South Ossetia, and Sukhumi, Abkhazia.

The ICRC maintained contacts with the Georgian Ministry of Defence to discuss cooperation in promoting humanitarian law among the armed forces. The Ministry continued its analysis of the ICRC's proposals. In Abkhazia, a one-day seminar on the law of armed conflict was conducted for 20 high-ranking officers.

contacts with the Ministry of Defence

cooperation with the National Society

The ICRC kept up its technical and financial support for the dissemination, tracing and information services of the Red Cross Society of Georgia. To cope with the growing workload, the tracing service posted a tracing officer in each region. The authorities had still not adopted alternative symbols for those misusing the red cross emblem, for example pharmacies, and the ICRC and the Georgian Red Cross decided to resume the national awareness campaign on the use of the protected emblem.
Some progress was made in 1998 in implementing the provisions of the "General Agreement on the Settlement of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan", signed in June 1997 by the government and the (UTO).* The armed conflict had officially ended, and there was a decline in the incidence of armed clashes and of acts of violence against civilians. Furthermore, nearly all UTO combatants in Afghanistan, numbering about 3,500, had been repatriated by the end of September, as stipulated in the protocols to the General Agreement. Nonetheless, a number of crucial issues remained unresolved. The amnesty law enacted as part of the peace process provided for the release of all fighters captured by government and opposition forces, but it was difficult to ascertain how many had actually been freed. The humanitarian situation of the repatriated UTO fighters and their families who registered in assembly areas to be demobilized remained a matter of concern. The ICRC provided medical assistance in the assembly areas for 3,848 former fighters.

The peace process was overshadowed by a series of crises throughout the year. The situation remained extremely volatile, as witnessed by the murder of four UNMOT* members in July 1998, which led to the withdrawal of all international staff from the Tavildara/Garm region until November. Tensions ran high throughout the year in the Kofarnikhon area, east of Dushanbe, where repeated clashes between local opposition groups and government units claimed a number of civilian victims. Relations between the government and the opposition soured further in September following the assassination of a major opposition figure and key

* UTO: United Tajik Opposition
* UNMOT: United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan
no access to detainees

advocate of peace. However, at the end of the year, when a large armed force led
by an insurgent colonel attacked Khodjent in the Leninabad Oblast in the north
of the country, government and UTO troops joined forces to take control of the
situation. This was the worst outbreak of violence since the signing of the peace
agreement, leaving hundreds of civilians and servicemen dead or wounded, and
causing large-scale damage to houses and infrastructure.

These events occurred against the backdrop of an alarming rise in crime, with
murders, robberies, abductions, and car hijacking reported in Dushanbe every
week.

Despite numerous contacts at the highest levels, access was still not granted to
detainees held by the government on the grounds that Tajik legislation allows no
outside contacts whatsoever for detainees under investigation. The ICRC was thus
unable to ascertain the inmates' treatment and living conditions at first hand.
Delegates were nonetheless present in the prisons daily during the first half of the
year to monitor the food programme.

Launched two years ago in 14 Tajik prisons, the nutritional programme for
detainees was ended in June 1998. In a final report to the penitentiary authorities,
the ICRC noted that the nutritional situation had improved slightly wherever it
was monitored regularly, but emphasized that the overall result was still disapp­
pointing in view of the large amounts of food provided. The report also drew the
authorities' attention to the persistent health problems in prisons. The authorities
assured the ICRC that they were providing the prison health services with ad­
tional financial resources which should improve the situation. In order to help
guarantee proper feeding of the prison population in the months after the nutri­
tional programme had ended, the ICRC set up a one-off agronomy programme
under which agricultural supplies were distributed to farmers who agreed to give
part of the crop to the penitentiary services. An ICRC agronomist monitored
these operations until after the harvest, which yielded less than expected owing to
adverse weather conditions.

The ICRC began the year by distributing basic medicines and dressing material
to the main military and civilian hospitals in Dushanbe, where supplies were run­
ning short because of security precautions taken after the events of November
successfully kept two central hospitals and six minor hospitals supplied with essential drugs and helped maintain hygiene until activities were suspended as a result of the murder of the four UNMOT staff members. The resumption of the projects in November was greeted with relief by the local population and authorities, as the shortage of medicines in the hospitals had become a serious concern. The health delegate also worked with local medical staff to improve nursing care and the management of pharmaceutical supplies.

As Tajikistan had no adequate facilities to provide treatment for the country's estimated 3,000 amputees, the ICRC rehabilitated a prosthetic/orthotic centre in Dushanbe, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Security and the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan. Repair work on the centre continued throughout 1998, and raw materials were procured to manufacture and repair artificial limbs. The orthopaedic department of Karabola hospital agreed to carry out stump revisions if needed, the ICRC providing the necessary surgical material, when the centre opens in 1999.

Heavy snowfalls in the winter and spring rains caused the worst natural disaster to strike Tajikistan in 30 years. The districts of Garm in the Karategin valley and Vose in the south were hit by floods and landslides which caused about 100 deaths, injured dozens of people and made several thousand homeless (government estimates). Elsewhere, buildings, roads, bridges, irrigation systems and thousands of hectares of farmland suffered extensive damage. The ICRC supplied the population with relief goods through the Tajik Red Crescent. During repeated outbreaks of fighting, the ICRC provided food and non-food relief items to families who had lost their main breadwinners or their homes, as well as contributing to the National Society's assistance programme and community kitchens.

After the February and June earthquakes in the region of Rostaq, northern Afghanistan, the ICRC delegation in Dushanbe contributed personnel, vehicles and equipment to the relief operations run by its colleagues over the border.

The ICRC kept up its efforts to have the law of armed conflict incorporated in training courses and applied by the various armed forces present in Tajikistan. Cooperation programmes were established with the Russian Border Guards and CIS peace-keeping forces, as well as with the UTO battalion deployed in Dushanbe under the terms of the peace agreement. Throughout the year the ICRC gave presentations and held seminars on the law of armed conflict for these groups and provided them with teaching materials. Meanwhile, the academies of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior, the Presidential Guard and the Tajik Border Troops introduced the law of armed conflict into their training programmes. The ICRC made recommendations for the syllabus, held seminars for instructors and officers, provided teaching aids, and cooperated in the production of a training manual.
implementation of humanitarian law

courses for students and schoolchildren

cooperation with the National Society

With technical advice from the ICRC, the Tajik government completed the revision of the penal code, adopted in May, which now incorporates a number of aspects of humanitarian law, including punishment for war crimes committed in international and internal armed conflicts. In June, the ICRC submitted an assessment of the draft Tajik Code of Penal Procedure from the standpoint of humanitarian law to the Minister of Justice and the Chairman of the Supreme Court. The ICRC took part in the working group preparing a new "Commentary on the Penal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan". At the end of the year, a report by the ICRC Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law was delivered to the authorities, encouraging the creation of a national committee for the implementation of humanitarian law.

Cooperation with the Ministry of Education continued, as did working contacts with the faculties of law at Tajik State University and Khodjent State University, which were holding courses on humanitarian law for the second year running. The newly established Russian-Tajik (Slavonic) University and the Tajik Tax Law Institute introduced humanitarian law into the curricula of the law and journalism faculties. The ICRC cooperated closely with the chairs of Penal Law at the different universities to ensure that humanitarian law was adequately covered in courses on penal law, in accordance with its inclusion in the new Tajik Penal Code. Lecturers from six law faculties attended an international conference on the teaching of humanitarian law organized by the ICRC regional delegation in Tashkent.

After successful completion of the pilot phase of the schools programme in several schools in Dushanbe and southern Tajikistan, the textbook was revised and adopted as the official textbook for the compulsory eighth-grade "educational hour". The ICRC and the Tajik Red Crescent Society signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education making use of the manual compulsory for the next five years.

The ICRC worked closely with the Tajik Red Crescent, in particular with the five branches in the Karategin and Tavildara valleys, in carrying out joint relief activities for the most vulnerable population groups. Following the clashes in the Leninabad Oblast in November, the local Red Crescent branch and the ICRC worked together in identifying needs and in distributing food, non-food and medical supplies. The ICRC continued to provide training and other support in the areas of tracing and dissemination.

10 See p. 231.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- collected 170 Red Cross messages from civilians and detainees and distributed 172;
- under the nutritional rehabilitation programme covering some 7,000 detainees, provided essential medicines, vitamin tablets, over 423 tonnes of cereals, 190 tonnes of pulses, 40 tonnes of vegetable oil, and some 8.5 tonnes of soap;
- delivered 638 tonnes of seed potatoes, 1.6 tonnes of wheat seed, over 166 tonnes of fertilizer and pesticides and 35 tonnes of diesel to the penitentiary services for distribution to the farms involved in the agronomy programme for prisons;
- distributed 9,864 food parcels, 81 tonnes of wheat flour, 2,633 blankets and 1.3 tonnes of other relief supplies to the victims of avalanches and landslides in the Karategin and Tavildara valleys, jointly with the National Society;
- supplied 7.5 tonnes of high-energy milk and enriched biscuits, 218 rolls of plastic sheeting, 3,055 kg of clothing, 100 tents and 9 tonnes of soap for victims of the two Afghan earthquakes;
- after outbreaks of fighting around Dushanbe, provided families who had lost their breadwinners or their homes with 409 mattresses, 663 blankets, 149 pairs of shoes, 3,800 kg of flour, and 306 family parcels;
- following clashes in Khodjent in November, distributed 12 tonnes of food and 3.4 tonnes of non-food items to 225 families (1,125 persons) whose homes had been destroyed;
- carried out monthly drug distributions to five rural hospitals in Garm district and 1 central hospital in Tavildara;
- provided medical assistance for 3,848 demobilized UTO fighters in the assembly areas;
- in the aftermath of clashes in the Kofarnikhon area, supplied hospitals in and around Dushanbe with medical materials;
- supplied 8 hospitals in the Leninabad Oblast with emergency assistance for the treatment of some 400 wounded after fighting erupted in the region in November;
- carried out repair work on a building to be used for a prosthetic/orthotic centre in Dushanbe;
- held regular meetings with the National Society and the Federation, so as to ensure a coordinated response to needs arising from both conflict situations and natural disasters;
- arranged for 2 representatives of the Tajik Ministry of Justice to take part in the first course on implementation organized by the ICRC's Advisory Service at the Moscow regional delegation;
- held 3-day courses on humanitarian law for officers and soldiers under the authority of the Tajik Ministries of Defence and of the Interior, and for Russian border troops; financed publication of teaching materials (2,500 copies);
- organized a 3-day course for 34 Ministry of Security instructors and officers on human rights and humanitarian law for police and security forces;
- held an introductory seminar on humanitarian law for 20 military commanders of the UTO;
- supported the production of 20,000 copies of the booklet "Rules of Behaviour in Combat for the Tajik Interior Troops" and posters explaining the use of the red cross and red crescent emblems;
- completed the Tajik translation of Basic Rules of the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and distributed 5,000 copies to academic institutions and the Tajik armed and security forces;
- supported the introduction of a new course entitled "The Mass Media and Armed Conflict" at the faculties of journalism and interpreting of the Tajik State University;
- printed 150,000 copies of the schools programme textbook and 5,000 copies of the teachers' manual for distribution throughout the country.
TASHKENT
Regional delegation
(Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

The Central Asian States covered by the Tashkent regional delegation were all severely affected in 1998 by the economic crisis in east Asia, the collapse of the Russian economy, and a sharp fall in the prices of raw materials. The majority of the population experienced increased hardship as the social welfare system continued to disintegrate. In addition, governments in the region were concerned about political and military developments in Afghanistan and had to deal with the problem of Afghan and Tajik refugees.

The Tashkent regional delegation continued to pursue the three major goals of disseminating international humanitarian law, strengthening the operational capacity of the region’s National Societies, and providing logistic support for the ICRC operation in Tajikistan.

The ICRC continued to provide advice and technical support to governments with a view to having international humanitarian law incorporated into national legislation. In all four countries covered, the ICRC carried out studies of the new or amended penal codes from the standpoint of humanitarian law and informed the relevant government departments of the results. In Kyrgyzstan, an ICRC report on the state of implementation of humanitarian law in the national legislation of Kyrgyzstan was submitted to the government. Also in 1998, the Kyrgyz government passed a resolution to formally ratify the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Representatives of the Kyrgyz and Turkmen governments took part in a seminar on the implementation of humanitarian law, organized by the ICRC in Moscow.

To promote the formal inclusion of the law of armed conflict in teaching and training programmes at all levels of the armed forces, and hence its application in military operations, the ICRC invited high-ranking officials from the four countries covered by the delegation to take part in international courses and conferences on international humanitarian law. In particular, senior Defence Ministry representatives from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan attended the Russian-language course on the law of armed conflict in San Remo, while their Kazakh and Kyrgyz counterparts attended an ICRC Conference for Heads of Military Training in Geneva. Upon his return from this conference, the Deputy Defence Minister of Kyrgyzstan took a number of measures to include this body of law in army training programmes. Two senior officers from the Kyrgyz Ministry of the Interior and the National Guard respectively attended the regional course on the law of armed conflict conducted by the ICRC in Moscow in October.

In the meantime, the ICRC ran one-week training courses on the law of armed conflict for armed forces instructors at the academies of the Ministries of Defence
and of the Interior and the National Guard in Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. The Ministries began preparing teaching manuals, with ICRC advice, to be used in the official training programmes for the armed forces.

In May 1998, the ICRC and the Ministry of Defence of Kyrgyzstan signed a cooperation agreement on the teaching of the law of armed conflict. As a result, a ten-hour course on the subject was included in the armed forces training programmes from September 1998. In the autumn, an ICRC delegate gave two presentations to instructors from the Ministry of Defence Academy in Tashkent, with a view to introducing training programmes on the law of armed conflict for the armed forces.

Regular contacts were maintained with universities in all four countries, with the twofold aim of having humanitarian law included as a substantial component of all academic courses on international law and of setting up specialized courses on the subject at selected universities. Kyrgyz and Uzbek universities offered specialized courses on humanitarian law to students of law and international relations for the first time, while such courses continued at Kazakh and Turkmen State Universities for the second year. In Kazakhstan, a standard curriculum on humanitarian law was drawn up with ICRC support and distributed by the Ministry of Education to all law faculties in the country as part of the official programme. A similar standard programme is now being set up in Kyrgyzstan. In all four countries, the ICRC provided training and support for lecturers and guidance for postgraduate students. The regional delegation also organized seminars and talks for students at various universities and other academic institutions, on both national and regional levels.

Efforts to familiarize schoolchildren with the fundamental humanitarian principles and Red Cross/Red Crescent values were pursued in 1998.11 In Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, training courses and seminars for teachers were held to prepare for the introduction of a compulsory secondary school course on civics entitled *Man and Society*. A course textbook, prepared by the ICRC delegation and a team of local consultants, was introduced in a trial phase in Uzbekistan.

In November, a headquarters agreement was signed by the ICRC and the Turkmen government, making it easier to provide logistic support from Turkmenistan to ICRC operations in Afghanistan. Furthermore, in October, the regional delegation opened a small office in the Uzbek town of Termez, on the border with Afghanistan, for the same purpose.

The National Societies of the region continued to receive support in developing and promoting their activities, notably in the areas of dissemination and tracing, and in raising their public profile. In particular, the ICRC helped them organize projects for local volunteers and tracing and dissemination seminars, which were held on both national and regional levels.

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11 See p. 231.
- signed formal cooperation agreements on tracing and dissemination activities with the National Societies of the 4 Republics;
- provided financial and technical support for dissemination activities in the 4 countries, and supported National Society translations of several ICRC publications into the national languages;
- gave the region's National Societies training and guidance for the restoration of family links;
- organized a workshop to provide the 4 National Societies of the region with training in humanitarian law and the Fundamental Principles of the Movement;
- in all 4 countries, financed a number of small projects at the end of the year, such as production of a 1999 calendar, distribution of New Year gifts to deprived children, and provision of furniture for a socio-medical centre and sports equipment for inmates of a prison for young offenders;
- in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, financed the furnishing and equipping of conference rooms in the newly renovated National Society premises, to be used mainly for dissemination sessions on humanitarian law and the Movement;
- in all 4 countries, held training courses and gave presentations on the law of armed conflict for armed forces instructors of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior and the National Guard;
- helped prepare training manuals on the law of armed conflict at the academies of the Ministries of Defence and of the Interior and the National Guard in Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan;
- held a specially designed 1-week training course on the law of armed conflict for the Kazakh officers of the Central Asian peace-keeping battalion, at the request of the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- in Kyrgyzstan, organized a 3-day seminar on humanitarian law and its national implementation for high-ranking representatives of the executive, the judiciary, and academic circles;
- signed a cooperation agreement with the Tashkent State Law Institute formally introducing humanitarian law into the official teaching programme;
- organized a round-table discussion for professors of international law in Bishkek, after which 2 Kyrgyz universities decided to introduce humanitarian law into their teaching programmes;
- together with the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan, carried out 7 2-day training courses for teachers involved in the trial phase of the schools programme, which involves about 200 teachers and around 6,000 pupils;
- in Kazakhstan, drew up a strategy with a team of local consultants to introduce lessons on humanitarian law and the ICRC into a compulsory secondary school course on civics;
- in cooperation with the Uzbek Red Crescent Society, showed the People and War photo exhibition in Tashkent, which attracted over 4,000 people during 10 days;
- at the invitation of the Kazakh Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Defence, organized a seminar on anti-personnel mines and the Ottawa treaty, which was attended by about 50 officials from different ministries.
In 1998, the ICRC collected 307,403 Red Cross messages from and distributed 295,605 to detainees, displaced people and countless others who could not otherwise keep in touch with their families. The ICRC also received 14,799 requests from families anxious to hear from relatives missing in times of conflict or other disturbances.
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: 83
National Societies: 4
Local employees: 2405

Total expenditure Sfr 35,358,707

Expenditure breakdown
Protection/tracing: 19,323,307
Relief: 207,737
Health activities: 6,763,952
Cooperation with National Societies: 2,100,818
Promotion/dissemination: 2,113,711
Operational support: 2,727,694
Overheads: 2,121,488

1 Average figures calculated on an annual basis.
2 Under ICRC contract, as at December 1998.
One of the most serious developments in the Middle East during the year was the mounting tension in Iraq, which came to a head in December with American and British air strikes. As the dispute escalated, the living conditions of the Iraqi population deteriorated still further and remained a priority concern for the ICRC. Major medical and prosthetic/orthotic programmes and water-supply projects were implemented. In view of the extent of the country’s needs a decision was taken at the end of the year to conduct a comprehensive assessment in those areas.

There was significant progress in regard to the some 9,000 prisoners of war still held after the Iran-Iraq conflict. Nearly 6,000 were released by Iran and repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC, whereas about 3,500 others, whom the ICRC interviewed in Iran, refused to return to Iraq.

The ICRC continued to contend with the humanitarian implications of the Gulf war within the framework of the Tripartite Commission, which brings together Iraq and the Coalition States. The three meetings held in 1998 took place in a constructive atmosphere, but following the air strikes the Iraqi delegation announced at the end of December that it would not be attending the meeting of the Technical Subcommittee scheduled for early 1999.

Despite intensive diplomatic negotiations, no solution was found for the problems relating to implementation of the Oslo Agreement in the Near East or for the Western Sahara situation in North Africa. In Algeria extreme violence persisted. The plight of the victims in those regions was a source of grave concern for the ICRC, which stepped up its representations to bring about a humanitarian settlement.

In spite of the efforts which led to the signing in October of the Wye Plantation Agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, under the active auspices of the United States, the peace process failed to make any substantial progress. Towards the end of the year implementation of the agreement was deadlocked.

The ICRC continued its activities in aid of the Arab populations in the Israeli-occupied territories. The treatment of prisoners and the consequences in humanitarian terms of the settlements were issues of major concern. In the ICRC’s view, Israel remains bound by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 until a final peace agreement consistent with international law is concluded on the status of the occupied territories.

Representations were made at a very high level in an attempt to find a solution to the problem of the Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front, most of whom have been in detention for over 20 years. The ICRC, which visits almost all of them, considers that a comprehensive repatriation of prisoners (as provided for in the United Nations Settlement Plan) should take place irrespective of the status of the Sahrawis. The ICRC’s efforts centred on the urgent need to reunite with their families 84 prisoners released by the Polisario Front back in April 1997. At the end of the year the ICRC decided to step up the medical assistance it provides for the prisoners
pending a general repatriation. It also remained concerned about the fate of people still unaccounted for in this context.

The ICRC repeated its offer of services to the Algerian authorities with a view to visiting, in accordance with its customary procedures, all places of detention, assisting the victims of the violence in the country and spreading knowledge of humanitarian law, in cooperation with the Algerian Red Crescent.

Throughout 1998 ICRC delegates continued their visits to places of detention in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen, and at the end of the year an affirmative reply was received from the Qatar authorities to the ICRC's offer of services to visit detainees.

Spectacular progress was made during the year in an important area - the dissemination of humanitarian law. For the first time, courses on the law of armed conflict were held for the armed and security forces in Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia. The ICRC's regional promotion office in Cairo considerably increased its production of information material for television and radio, which was designed to reach a vast Arabic-speaking audience and focused in particular on humanitarian law and the principles of Arab civilization and Islam.

Steps were taken to draw the attention of government circles in North Africa and the Middle East to the need to implement international humanitarian law and combat anti-personnel mines. In the latter context, three countries in the region (Jordan, Qatar and Yemen) ratified the Ottawa treaty prohibiting these deadly weapons in 1998.
Near East

ISRAEL, THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE AUTONOMOUS TERRITORIES

In June 1998 the State of Israel celebrated the 50th anniversary of its founding. That event was perceived in very different ways by Israeli society and by the Palestinian population and prompted violent clashes in the occupied territories. For their part, the Israelis continued to express widely divergent views on the Israeli-Arab negotiations and the means of achieving peace. As a result the Oslo process remained deadlocked until the conclusion of the Wye Plantation Agreement.

That Agreement, which was signed on 23 October following intensive negotiations in which United States President Bill Clinton was personally involved, stipulates that Israel must hand over 13% of the occupied territories on the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority for its part must take steps to guarantee the Jewish population a greater degree of security. Provision is also made, as part of the implementation of the Agreement, for the release of 750 detainees held by Israel.

On 20 November the Israeli authorities released 250 detainees. Demonstrations, some of them violent, ensued in all the towns of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to express the population's dissatisfaction at the number and category of prisoners who had been freed.

In December the President of the United States, who travelled to the Near East pursuant to the Wye Plantation Agreement, paid an official visit to Israel. He also went for the first time to the part of the Gaza Strip under autonomous Palestinian rule.

After an initial withdrawal from a small part of the occupied territories Israel again put a halt to implementation of the Agreement. At the same time the government of Benjamin Netanyahu was forced into a minority and early
elections were planned for 1999. Thus at the end of the year the process appeared to have reached deadlock once again.

In the territories occupied by Israel for 31 years, there were periods of relative calm punctuated by outbursts of violence.

The ICRC considers that until a final agreement consistent with international law is reached on the status of the occupied territories, Israel remains bound by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, in particular as regards the executive and administrative powers which that State actually exercises.

The importance of the ICRC's mandate to act as a neutral intermediary was demonstrated in 1998 by the operation in June to repatriate mortal remains and detainees released from Israeli prisons and from the Khiam detention centre in occupied southern Lebanon (see below, and under Lebanon).

For the ICRC, which has been working in the region since 1967, the treatment of prisoners and the humanitarian implications of the settlements were matters of profound concern. The ICRC repeatedly called upon the Israeli government to comply with international humanitarian law and to take the action necessary to put an end to violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In spite of its representations the ICRC observed no improvement in the humanitarian situation.

The ICRC's Director of Operations, accompanied by the Delegate-General for the Middle East and North Africa, was in Israel from 29 May to 2 June. There he met the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and several of his colleagues. The talks centred on the activities of the ICRC and the problems it encounters.

During the year there were a number of bomb attacks against Israeli civilians. Such indiscriminate acts constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. The ICRC once again called for compliance with the most elementary rules of that body of law.

Pursuant to several resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1997 and 1998, the Swiss Confederation, the depositary State of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, convened a meeting of experts on the general problems that arose in implementing the Fourth Geneva Convention. The meeting was held in Geneva from 27 to 29 October 1998 and brought together representatives of 117 States Parties and 15 observers. The ICRC had drawn up a report on the subject at the request of the Swiss authorities. The participants reaffirmed that the Geneva Conventions provide valid protection for the civilian population in times of armed conflict.

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4 See pp. 314-315.
Israeli and Palestinian representatives had met earlier in Geneva, from 9 to 11 June, under the auspices of the Swiss government and in the presence of the ICRC.

The civilian population protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention continued to be affected by major humanitarian problems in 1998. Difficulties of access to the labour market, restrictions imposed on trade and the sealing off of the territories had an adverse effect on economic activity, in both the short and the long term. The expansion of settlements, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, continued.

On the West Bank there were many clashes, leaving a number of people dead or wounded (in particular in March, May and at the end of the year) in the Hebron and Jerusalem areas. Thousands of people remained separated from their families. People were kept in detention outside the occupied territories, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. There were numerous cases of expropriation of land and demolition of houses, particularly in the areas entirely under the control of the Israeli authorities. Several dozen Bedouin families had to leave the areas where they were living; their tents were destroyed and their herds confiscated. Other measures, such as revocation of the right of abode (in East Jerusalem), confiscation of identity papers and forcible transfers, were also taken throughout the year against protected persons.

The ICRC did its utmost to improve the lot of civilians living in the occupied territories. Despite its representations to the Israeli government, it failed to bring about full compliance with humanitarian law. A very large number of cases of violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention were reported to the authorities.

In 1998 the ICRC continued its visits to places of detention in Israel. As of July it carried out a complete series of visits to the country’s 18 main places of detention and presented a periodic report to the authorities in August. ICRC delegates had regular access to around 3,600 detainees, 975 of whom were seen in private for the first time. Recommendations for improving treatment and conditions of detention were submitted to the prison authorities.

Particular attention was paid to the treatment of detainees under interrogation. The ICRC occasionally encountered obstacles in the way of its visits to that category of detainee within the time-limits laid down in the agreement on the matter signed with the authorities.

By the end of 1998 the ICRC had still not gained access to two Lebanese nationals held by Israel since 1989 and 1994 respectively. However, a third detainee of Lebanese origin was visited for the first time in May, two years after his arrest.

As in the past, the ICRC continued to fund and organize, in cooperation with the PRCS,* family visits to detainees held in Israeli prisons.

* PRCS: "Palestinian Red Crescent Society"
A 1997 judgement of the Israeli High Court was made public in 1998. According to that judgement, certain Lebanese detainees may continue to be held after their sentences have been completed to serve as bargaining chips. The ruling, which is tantamount to holding those prisoners hostage, constitutes a violation of the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC made repeated representations to the authorities to put an end to the practice, but in vain.

On 25 June the ICRC delegation in Israel took part, together with the delegation in Lebanon, in an operation to repatriate the mortal remains of an Israeli serviceman and 40 Lebanese fighters. The following day, ten people held in prisons in Israel and 50 detainees from the Khiam detention centre in occupied southern Lebanon were released and handed over to the ICRC.

The ICRC had been in contact with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities on this matter since September 1997 and, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, had forwarded messages between the parties. It remained at the disposal of the parties to elucidate the fate of Israeli soldiers and Arab fighters reported missing in action in Lebanon and still unaccounted for.

Following the repatriation operation the ICRC was able to resume visits to the Khiam detention centre, to which the authorities had suspended access in September 1997.

In 1998 the ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary between Israel and countries with which it had no diplomatic relations or peace agreements.

The ICRC also acted as a neutral intermediary during the clashes in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank, facilitating emergency medical evacuations (see below under "Palestinian Red Crescent").

For some 30 years now the major problem for the Syrian population living on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights has been the separation of family members. Through its delegations in Israel and Syria the ICRC continued to provide assistance, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, to civilians protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. In particular, it facilitated the passage of people who had to cross the demarcation line for humanitarian reasons.

The ICRC repeated its representations with a view to ensuring that the Israeli forces and the SLA* militia fighting at their side in the occupied zone of southern Lebanon comply with humanitarian, law, and that all the parties involved in the region abide by the rules on the conduct of hostilities.

At the request of the Palestinian Authority, the ICRC visits civilian and military places of detention in the autonomous territories. The visits are carried out in accordance with procedures set out in a Memorandum of Understanding signed

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* SLA: South Lebanon Army
with the Palestinian Authority in 1996. In 1998 delegates visited 2,800 detainees in some 40 facilities in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank.

The ICRC offices in the occupied and the autonomous territories arranged for the exchange of Red Cross messages between dispersed family members, issued detention certificates required for administrative procedures and facilitated the movement of Palestinians for various reasons (visits to relations in detention, marriages, deaths, pilgrimages and study at Arab universities, for example).

In 1998 activities to increase awareness and understanding of humanitarian law and of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were considerably expanded in Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories.

In Israel an ICRC legal specialist held a course on humanitarian law at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Also at the Hebrew University, the ICRC was invited to explain to law students the ICRC’s code of ethics concerning respect for human dignity in places of detention.

In June two talks on the law of armed conflict were given at the Tel Aviv Staff College by the Geneva-based head of dissemination for the armed forces. They were attended by around 50 Israeli military officers.

A round table on the ICRC’s activities in the occupied and the autonomous territories brought together representatives of the Israeli civilian administration and ICRC delegates.

In the autonomous territories courses on humanitarian law were introduced into the programmes of seven Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank, and members of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service received instruction in the rules of the law. A series of lectures on humanitarian law was also given for members of the Department of Planning and International Cooperation.

Under the 1997 Seville Agreement, the ICRC is responsible for coordinating the Movement’s activities in the occupied and the autonomous territories.

As in the previous year, various National Societies ran bilateral projects under ICRC auspices in the occupied territories. The Australian Red Cross drew up an assessment report on the Women’s Development Project, launched in Gaza in 1996, in order to determine the direction it should take over the next three years. The Netherlands Red Cross provided financial support and material and medical assistance for the seven hospitals and clinics run by the PRCS on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. It also supported the Society’s primary health care programmes (in particular staff training and management techniques).

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5 This programme is funded by ECHO (European Community Humanitarian Office).
On 17 February the ICRC and the PRCS signed an agreement establishing the framework and procedures for cooperation in 1998. The ICRC continued to provide support for the Society’s ambulance service (operating and equipment costs).

A special effort was made to set up an emergency medical service at the Gaza branch of the PRCS. Staff were recruited and trained at a newly established centre and the Gaza ambulance service was taken over by the PRCS. Seven ambulances were fully equipped. Communication systems were improved so as to install a genuine "evacuation chain" for people injured during clashes from the moment they are picked up to the time they are admitted to hospital.

The ICRC also supported the PRCS documentation centre. Courses on communication techniques were held for local branches, and the Society organized a campaign to promote respect for the emblem on the occasion of World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May.

As previously, the ICRC supplied the MDA* with medical equipment for its blood bank. On 4 November ICRC representatives were invited to the official opening of the blood transfusion centre on the occasion of the MDA’s 50th anniversary.

Efforts to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between the PRCS and the MDA continued in 1998. In that connection the ICRC organized courses on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip for the staff of the two organizations.

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* Two vehicles were funded by ECHO, one by the Düsseldorf Staatskanzlei and four by the ICRC.

* MDA: Magen David Adom
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- carried out 216 visits to 32 places of detention run by the Israeli authorities, during which it regularly saw 3,600 individuals protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention, talking to 975 of them without witnesses for the first time;
- took part, on 25 and 26 June, in the repatriation of the mortal remains of an Israeli soldier and 40 Lebanese fighters and in the release and return home of 10 detainees freed from Israeli prisons and of 50 detainees freed from the Khiam detention centre in occupied southern Lebanon;
- in cooperation with the "Palestinian Red Crescent", organized 113,629 family visits to detainees;
- issued, authenticated or copied 15,151 detention certificates;
- restored and maintained contact between detainees held in Israeli facilities and their families by forwarding 5,294 Red Cross messages;
- provided detainees with educational and recreational items;
- restored and maintained contact between inhabitants of Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories and their families resident in countries having no diplomatic relations with Israel;
- processed 40 tracing requests;
- organized transfers between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syria;
- made representations to the relevant authorities to remind them of their obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention as regards civilians in occupied territories;
- provided 84 tents for people whose houses had been demolished by Israeli security forces in the occupied territories;
- supplied equipment for the Magen David Adom blood bank;
- took part in a seminar organized by the MDA for its senior staff;
- in order to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between the PRCS and the MDA, organized courses for the staff of the two organizations on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip;
- held a course on humanitarian law at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem;
- gave presentations on the law of armed conflict to around 50 officers of the Israeli armed forces at the Tel Aviv Staff College;
- organized a round table on the ICRC's activities in the occupied and the autonomous territories which brought together representatives of the Israeli civilian administration and ICRC delegates.

7 See pp. 280-281.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- carried out 256 visits to 39 places of detention run by the Palestinian security services, during which it visited around 2,800 detainees, seeing 1,731 of them in private;
- provided detainees with educational and recreational items;
- supported PRCS programmes relating to care for the wounded (support for the ambulance service and staff training);
- contributed to the setting-up of a PRCS emergency service (evacuation and treatment of casualties) in Gaza, in particular by fitting out 7 ambulances, improving communication systems and training specialized staff;
- to mark 8 May, organized a drawing competition in cooperation with the PRCS multi-purpose community centre in Khan Yunis, in which 400 children took part.
JORDAN

In Jordan, 1998 was marked by the prolonged absence of King Hussein who was in hospital in the United States from June to December. The King died in Amman on 7 February 1999.

As in previous years, the ICRC's activities in Jordan covered the following areas: visits to places of detention, restoration and maintenance of family ties in the Israeli-occupied territories, dissemination of humanitarian law, and cooperation with the Jordan National Red Crescent Society.

The delegation in the Jordanian capital again served as the logistic base for the ICRC's relief activities in Iraq. This role was particularly important in December following the air strikes launched against Iraq.

On 13 October 1997 the ICRC suspended its visits to the GID* because its delegates were refused access to the detainees held there. Representations were made immediately at the highest level, and were repeated at the beginning of 1998. The ICRC was able to resume its regular visits to the GID on 11 February, apart from a hiatus from 11 May to 16 June.

ICRC delegates continued to pay regular visits to seven other places of detention under the responsibility of the Public Security Directorate and the Military Intelligence Directorate. In August they visited Jafer prison in the south of the country following its reopening.

The ICRC continued its activities in aid of Jordanian and Palestinian families with relatives held in Israel and the occupied territories, or in Kuwait as a result of the Gulf war.

Red Cross messages and official documents were forwarded during the year. In cooperation with the Jordan Red Crescent, the ICRC organized ambulance transfers of urgent medical cases across the river Jordan. In coordination with UNHCR, the ICRC issued travel documents for refugees without identity papers who were leaving for host countries.

The cooperation established with the Jordan Red Crescent and the Ministry of Education was consolidated in 1998 by the introduction of texts on humanitarian law for the final year of secondary school. Furthermore, an 11-page chapter dealing with the history of the Red Cross since its inception in 1863 was incorporated in the history textbooks of candidates for the tawjihi, the equivalent of the secondary school leaving certificate.

Several courses and briefing sessions on the law of armed conflict were organized in May and November for members of the armed forces and the police.

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* The Red Crescent was officially recognized in 1929.

* GID: General Intelligence Directorate
- carried out 42 visits to 454 security detainees at 8 places of detention and registered 357 of them for the first time;
- arranged for the exchange of 543 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families;
- organized, in May, a visit to Kuwait for families (25 people) with relatives detained in that country;
- repatriated, on 7 May, 5 Jordanian detainees released by the Kuwaiti authorities;
- organized, in October, a visit for 12 families (21 people) to relatives detained in Israel;
- restored and maintained contacts between families living in Jordan and their relatives held in Israel and Kuwait by forwarding 951 Red Cross messages;
- restored and maintained contacts between Jordanian families split up as a result of various conflicts by exchanging 67 Red Cross messages;
- arranged for the delivery of 37 official documents for families separated from relatives residing in the Israeli-occupied territories or the autonomous territories;
- issued travel documents for 357 people, most of them Iraqi nationals;

IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- issued 261 detention certificates in respect of detainees in Israel and in connection with the aftermath of the Gulf war;
- organized, on 15 and 16 April, a training workshop for 77 members of Jordan Red Crescent headquarters and branches and 26 officials of the Ministry of Education;
- formalized the incorporation of texts on humanitarian law in textbooks used in the final year of secondary school and, for candidates for the tawjihi (secondary school leaving examination), of texts on the history of the Red Cross;
- held, in May and November, courses on the law of armed conflict for 144 and 30 cadets respectively of the Amman Staff College and cadets from 12 other countries;
- organized an information day on the same subject for 28 female recruits from the Zarka Military Academy;
- gave a presentation on the ICRC and the Movement to 110 police officers in November;
- attended, in Amman in July, a conference on problems relating to landmine survivors organized by the NGO Landmine Survivors Network, in cooperation with the Jordan Red Crescent.
The ICRC delegation in Amman was invited by the Institute of Diplomacy to give a talk on humanitarian law and peace-keeping forces to officers of various units of the armed forces.

On 11 and 12 June the President of the ICRC took part in a conference organized in Amman by the non-governmental organization Landmine Survivors Network on the problems of anti-personnel landmine survivors. The meeting was held under the auspices of Queen Noor and organized in cooperation with the Jordan Red Crescent and the Hashemite Charity Society. The aim of the meeting, the first of its kind in the Middle East, was to mobilize the States of the region on the issue of aid for mine victims and to promote the Ottawa treaty banning landmines. On 13 November Jordan ratified the Ottawa treaty.

The 28th Conference of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies took place on 22 and 23 September. The ICRC's permanent Vice-President and the Delegate-General for the Middle East and North Africa, accompanied by the heads of delegations in the region, represented the ICRC at the event. On 24 September the ICRC President travelled to Amman for the official celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Jordan Red Crescent.

In the autumn the ICRC took part in the first regional seminar organized by the Jordan Red Crescent and the University of Wisconsin on disaster preparedness, which brought together 25 participants from various Arab and Asian countries.
LEBANON

In 1998 the internal political situation in Lebanon was returning to normal. In June municipal elections were held for the first time in 35 years and in November General Emile Lahoud was elected President of the Republic to succeed Elias Hrawi. At the end of November Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri resigned. He was succeeded on 2 December by Selim Hoss.

With regard to UN resolution 425, which calls for Israel's unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon, the Israeli government announced in April that it was willing to comply with that demand. However, it stated that such a move would have to be made outside the framework of a formal peace treaty and in return for security guarantees in respect of Israel’s northern border. The Lebanese government rejected that proposal, arguing that resolution 425 stipulated an unconditional withdrawal.

Military operations in southern Lebanon intensified during the first half of the year. The presence on the ground of the Monitoring Group, set up pursuant to the Understanding reached on 26 April 1996 following Operation Grapes of Wrath to urge the parties to the conflict to abide more strictly by the rules of the law of war, acted as a moderating factor in the fighting. The number of civilian casualties was considerably lower than in the previous year.

In August, for the first time since the April 1996 agreement, rockets were launched against northern Israel from southern Lebanon, wounding 12 people. At the end of the year the situation in southern Lebanon remained tense.

In the western Bekaa valley the Israeli army carried out several air raids during the year against presumed Palestinian positions, causing losses among the civilian population. On 22 December a Palestinian woman and her six children were killed during an Israeli air attack which was described as a mistake by the Israeli authorities. The next day Hezbollah launched several rockets against the Israeli town of Kyriat Shmona, wounding 13 people. Tension mounted after these incidents. The ICRC approached the two parties to remind them of the need to spare civilians during military operations.

For over 20 years the inhabitants of southern Lebanon, part of which is occupied by Israel, has been directly affected by the conflict. They are exposed not only to the dangers stemming from the hostilities, but also to various violations of humanitarian law, such as arbitrary detention, deportation out of the occupied zone and demolition of houses. Furthermore, problems of access to agricultural

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9 The group is made up of American, French, Israeli, Lebanese and Syrian representatives.

land, which is often situated in dangerous areas, the temporary sealing off of certain villages and the difficulty of access to medical care have dire consequences for the population both in economic terms and in terms of health and safety.

The ICRC approached all the parties to the conflict to urge them to abide by the provisions of humanitarian law and to spare civilians and civilian property. As previously, delegates on the ground recorded allegations of violations of the Geneva Conventions. Where necessary, the ICRC negotiated security guarantees with the various parties to enable its delegates to gain access to villages cut off by the fighting. In addition to medical aid for the region’s health facilities, family parcels, cooking utensils and blankets were distributed to the victims of clashes in areas close to the front line.

On 25 June the ICRC took part, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, in the repatriation of the mortal remains of an Israeli soldier and 40 Lebanese fighters. The remains were transported on board an aircraft made available by the French authorities and then handed over by the ICRC to representatives of their respective countries.

The next day ten people held in prisons in Israel and 50 detainees from the Khiam detention centre were released into the care of the ICRC. All the detainees had been able to speak in private with ICRC delegates to indicate their choice of destination. The ICRC transferred 55 detainees to Kfar Falous, just north of the occupied zone, where they were handed over to the Lebanese authorities.

The ICRC had been in contact with the Israeli and Lebanese authorities since September 1997, when it was asked to act as a neutral intermediary in forwarding messages between the parties.11

After a nine-month ban on visits the ICRC regained access on 7 July 1998 to the detainees protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention held at the Khiam detention centre in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon. Family visits to relatives in detention and the exchange of Red Cross messages, which the Israeli authorities had also suspended for the same period, were authorized again as of 9 July. Between September 1997 and June 1998 only parcels could be handed over for the detainees.

On 19 January a Lebanese national released after ten years in detention in Israel was repatriated by the ICRC.

On 3 September the ICRC took a female detainee released from the Khiam detention centre back to Beirut.

Many families remained split up in 1998 on account of the Israeli occupation of the south of the country. The ICRC’s services as a neutral intermediary therefore continued to be necessary for the delivery of messages and family parcels –

11 See pp. 267-270.
in particular those intended for Lebanese nationals held by Israel – and for the transfer and/or repatriation of civilians or released detainees across the front line.

In 1998, after more than half a century in exile, thousands of Palestinians were still living in precarious conditions in camps in Lebanon while awaiting a political solution.

The ICRC continued to provide support in the form of medicines and emergency supplies for the camps' medical facilities.

In view of the upsurge in fighting, medical assistance remained a priority along the front line and in the security zone. Through its nine mobile clinics the ICRC continued to provide considerable support for isolated villages whose inhabitants had no access to medical care. Two additional villages were served, bringing to ten the number of places visited regularly by ICRC teams.

Hospitals, dispensaries and first-aid posts on the front line, as well as hospitals and clinics in the Palestinian camps, received medical assistance from the ICRC. Following the increase in tension in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley, ad hoc distributions of emergency medical and surgical supplies were carried out in those two regions.

In October the ICRC was able to repair a water main at Kfar Falous, near Sidon, which had been damaged as a result of the fighting. However, it was not possible to complete work on the spring and the pipeline at Nabaa Tassi near Nabatiyeh despite lengthy negotiations with all the parties concerned to obtain the necessary security guarantees. The 46 villages that rely on the spring had to continue taking their drinking water from tanks.

In the areas affected by the conflict the ICRC kept up its support for the operational activities of the Lebanese Red Cross Society, concentrating on the National Society's first-aid services (training and equipment, for example), the maintenance of its ambulance network and the provision of medical assistance.

The ICRC took part in the regional Youth Leadership Training Course held near Beirut from 25 to 29 June. The event was organized by the Amman office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross.

The ICRC held courses on the law of armed conflict for the Lebanese armed forces in February and August.

On 21 February the ICRC was invited to take part in a workshop on the "Development of cooperation for protection against the danger of mines in Lebanon", organized by the Balamand University in Ashrafiyeh near Beirut under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. It brought together around 150 participants from academic and military circles and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations.

In March a colonel in the Lebanese army attended a course in humanitarian law at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy, and in
August a professor of international law took part in a seminar on humanitarian law held by the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

With regard to the media, the emphasis was on radio and television. Publicity spots were produced on children and war, prisoners of war and anti-personnel mines, and were broadcast by Lebanese television networks and radio stations throughout September.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- carried out 20 visits to 202 detainees at the Khiam detention centre, 102 of whom were seen in private for the first time;
- transferred, in June, 10 persons previously held in Israel and 50 detainees released from the Khiam detention centre by the South Lebanon Army;
- repatriated the mortal remains of an Israeli soldier and of 40 Lebanese fighters to their respective countries;
- repatriated, in January, 1 Lebanese detainee released by the Israeli authorities;
- in July, returned to his home a shepherd who had been captured by Hezbollah after straying onto the boundary of the security zone in late June;
- returned to Beirut, in September, a detainee released from the Khiam detention centre;
- organized 487 family visits to the Khiam detention centre;
- issued 642 detention certificates;
- made representations to the parties to the conflict whenever necessary to remind them of the need to comply with humanitarian law in respect of civilians;
- exchanged 5,439 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families;
- provided ad hoc assistance for victims of the conflict, distributing a total of 4,158 family parcels and 6,195 blankets;
- provided medical assistance for 16 hospitals, 27 dispensaries and various first-aid posts in the Israeli-occupied security zone and along the front line and for around 20 other facilities elsewhere in the country, particularly in the Bekaa valley;
- by means of its 9 mobile clinics, gave consultations in 10 isolated village on the front line;
- supplied assistance to 5 hospitals and 18 clinics in the Palestinian refugee camps;
- repaired, in October, a water main damaged by the fighting in Kfar Falous in southern Lebanon;
- maintained the operational capacity of the Lebanese Red Cross in areas affected by the conflict;
- took part, in June, in a training course for first-aiders which was organized by the Federation's office in Amman and brought together 26 participants from National Societies of the region and of the Gulf;
- set up, together with the National Society, a stand at the Sidon industrial fair;
- organized, from 10 to 16 February, a course on the law of armed conflict for 9 instructors from the Staff College of the Lebanese army;
- gave a presentation on the activities of the ICRC, the Movement and the emblem to 30 officers in August;
- produced spots on various subjects relating to humanitarian law and the danger of mines for radio stations and television networks;
- took part, in February, in a workshop on the "Development of cooperation for protection against the danger of mines in Lebanon", organized by the Balamand University in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.
SYRIA

As in previous years, the ICRC's work in the Syrian Arab Republic during the year was mainly connected with the humanitarian implications of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the dissemination of humanitarian law.

The ICRC continued to act as a neutral intermediary for the Syrian inhabitants of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, who are protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention. The dialogue between Israel and Syria on the occupied Golan Heights had not been resumed by the end of the year.

On 25 November the UN Security Council voted unanimously to extend the mandate of UNDOF* until 31 May 1999.

For dispersed families, whether Syrian nationals or Palestinian refugees, the ICRC forwarded family messages to relatives in third countries or the Israeli-occupied territories. It repatriated prisoners released by Israel and arranged for the passage of civilians across the demarcation line. It also issued travel documents for refugees accepted for resettlement in third countries.

Throughout the year the ICRC delegation in Damascus maintained regular contact with the Syrian authorities. It also remained in contact with representatives of various Palestinian groups in the capital.

Four Syrian nationals held in Israel were released in 1998. The ICRC arranged for the repatriation of three of them in February and the fourth in May. Those operations were carried out with the logistic support of UNDOF and UNTSO.*

As previously, the ICRC cooperated with UNHCR in providing travel documents for Iraqi refugees accepted for resettlement in third countries. An ICRC delegate went to the Al-Houl refugee camp in the north-east of the country for this purpose.

The prosthetic/orthotic centre run by the "Palestinian Red Crescent" (PRCS) in Damascus was able to increase production thanks to a hydraulic press donated by the ICRC's Special Fund for the Disabled in 1997. Orthopaedic components and parts for elbow crutches were produced using polypropylene, a light and low-cost material.

Under an agreement concluded with the PRCS and the ICRC, the German Red Cross covered the running costs of the prosthetic/orthotic centre in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus.

* UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
* UNTSO: United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
- organized, with logistic support from UNDOF, the repatriation of 4 Syrian detainees released by Israel (3 in February and 1 in May);

- organized 404 transfers of students and pilgrims between Syria and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights;

- exchanged 554 Red Cross messages between separated family members;

- issued travel documents for 376 refugees, most of them Iraqi nationals, who had been accepted in third countries;

- issued 19 detention certificates;

- provided support in the form of technical and material assistance for the prosthetic/orthotic centre of the "Palestinian Red Crescent" in Damascus, funded by the German Red Cross;

- funded the publication of 2 brochures, 1 on the basics of first aid and the principal rules of humanitarian law and the other on the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society; funded the Red Crescent stand at the Damascus Book Fair; supplied the National Society with documents on the dangers of landmines;

- provided training for National Society staff, in particular in methods of restoring family ties; held, in September, a course on humanitarian law for 96 young volunteers of the Damascus branch of the Syrian Red Crescent.

- drew up, at the request of the Syrian Ministry of Defence, a plan for courses to train instructors in the law of armed conflict; gave presentations, during two conferences in August, on the law of war for around 30 senior UNDOF officers;

- arranged for a professor of international law at the University of Damascus to attend a seminar organized jointly by the Graduate Institute of International Studies and the ICRC in Geneva in August;

- provided the Al-Assad national library and university professors in Damascus with documentation on humanitarian law.
The Ministry of Defence approached the ICRC with a view to increasing knowledge of the law of armed conflict among the Syrian armed forces. To that end, on 3 November the ICRC delegate in Damascus met high-ranking officers to whom he submitted proposals for courses to train instructors who in turn would teach humanitarian law to the troops.

From 27 June to 3 July two representatives of the armed forces attended a seminar in Syracuse, Italy, on humanitarian law and weapons control in armed conflicts, organized by the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences.

The ICRC delegate in Damascus attended, together with a representative from Geneva headquarters, the 16th Conference of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation from 11 to 13 July. In its final communiqué the conference urged the parliamentarians to work for the adherence by their respective States to the Ottawa treaty prohibiting anti-personnel mines.

The ICRC provided the Al-Assad national library and professors of international law in Damascus with documentation on humanitarian law.
The Gulf
IRAN

The resumption of negotiations between Iran and Iraq on issues still outstanding after the 1980-1988 war led to the repatriation, under ICRC auspices, of several thousand prisoners of war in April.12

Following the announcement by the Taliban authorities in Afghanistan of the discovery of the bodies of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist killed during the fighting in August in Mazar-i-Sharif, the Iranian government and the Taliban asked the ICRC to act as a neutral intermediary in the repatriation of the remains.

The repatriation operations were carried out on 14 September and 11 October by means of an aircraft chartered by the ICRC. The ICRC informed the parties that it remained at their disposal should its services be required again.

In October 36 Iranian nationals held at Kandahar prison were released by the Taliban forces and repatriated in two groups under the auspices of the ICRC.

On 26 May two senior members of the Iranian Red Crescent Society were received at ICRC headquarters in Geneva. The talks focused on cooperation projects.

Some 15 people from the National Society came to ICRC headquarters on 2 November for working meetings with various ICRC staff. The delegation was paying a visit to the Federation.

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12 See pp. 289-290.
The situation in Iraq deteriorated steadily in 1998. Already at the beginning of the year the United States threatened to resort to force, but the visit to Baghdad from 20 to 23 February by the UN Secretary-General made it possible to reach an agreement. In April the Security Council renewed the sanctions in effect since 1991. In spite of the extension of "oil for food" resolution 986, the humanitarian problems stemming from the sanctions worsened. In August the Iraqi authorities declared that they were no longer willing to cooperate with the international experts. The crisis intensified in October and November and all UN personnel were evacuated. On 5 November the Security Council adopted a new resolution and the UNSCOM* inspections resumed. A fresh crisis erupted following the report by the Chairman of UNSCOM. On 15 December UNSCOM personnel were evacuated once again and during the night of 16/17 December the United States and the United Kingdom launched a four-day campaign of air strikes dubbed "Operation Desert Fox".

The authorities in Baghdad stated that they would not allow UNSCOM to return and refused to comply with the air exclusion zones in the south and north of Iraq which had been in force since the Gulf war. The final days of 1998 were marked by incidents involving American aircraft and Iraqi air defence systems, and the year ended on a very tense note.

As soon as the air strikes began, the ICRC sent a diplomatic note to the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and Iraq reminding them of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Under that body of law, belligerents must take all necessary precautions to spare civilians and civilian property, to treat persons captured humanely, to ensure

* UNSCOM: United Nations Special Commission responsible for disarmament in Iraq
that the wounded and sick are collected and cared for, to protect medical establish­ments, personnel and means of transport, and to ensure respect for the red cross/red crescent emblem.

In Iraq itself the ICRC set up an emergency programme. Medical sets to treat the war-wounded, sheets and blankets were distributed with the cooperation of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society to Baghdad’s four major hospitals and to the main medical facilities in 14 other governorates.

In Tikrit, 200 kilometres to the north of Baghdad, a 400-bed hospital suffered blast damage when three missiles landed close by. The ICRC immediately started work to put the hospital back into operation as rapidly as possible. Repair work is set to continue in 1999.

The situation at six water treatment plants around the capital and those in Basra, Nasiriyah and Mosul was checked. Fortunately, no damage was found.

The decline in the living conditions of the Iraqi population, due in particular to the embargo that has remained in force for over eight years, continued to cause concern for the ICRC in 1998.

Despite implementation of "oil for food" resolution 986, the situation remained very difficult for the Iraqi population throughout the year. Oil production did not reach the level authorized by the Sanctions Committee, mainly because of the poor state of the installations, so Iraq was unable to import the necessary quantities of medicines, food and other essentials to make up for shortages. The medical infrastructure, water treatment and electricity generating plants and communica­tion systems, which had been out of action or disused since the beginning of the embargo in 1991, were also in a very precarious state. Water and sanitation programmes (see below) therefore remained a priority.

Although the implementation of resolution 986 enabled Iraq's water boards to obtain materials for the maintenance and repair of installations, the problems resulting from several years' interruption in the operation of certain facilities continued to cause a great deal of concern. As in previous years, the ICRC devoted a large part of its budget for Iraq to water treatment and sanitation work. However, in view of the general state of the country’s water-supply systems, this went only a short way towards meeting needs.

The seven ICRC teams (two expatriates and some 30 Iraqi engineers and technicians) completed some 50 projects throughout the country to repair or maintain drinking water and waste water treatment plants and sewage systems. Overall, several million people benefited from these programmes.

The ICRC supplied the chemicals and other materials necessary to operate and maintain water treatment and production plants. It supervised renovation work and, wherever possible, gave priority to the use of local personnel and resources (purchases or production on the spot).
In 1998 the ICRC and the Iraqi authorities signed several agreements relating to ongoing prosthetic/orthotic programmes for the war-disabled, mainly amputees from the Iran-Iraq conflict, casualties of the fighting in northern Iraq and people injured by landmines. On 28 March an agreement was concluded with the Ministry of Education concerning cooperation between the ICRC and the Institute of Medical Technology in Baghdad (assistance for an outpatient clinic at the Institute and training for specialist staff). In July the ICRC held a one-week seminar on the production of lower-limb prostheses using polypropylene. Eight technicians from the Ministries of Health and of Defence, the Institute and the Iraqi Red Crescent took part in the seminar, which resulted in the publication of a technical handbook in Arabic.

February saw the opening of the Ibn Al-Kuff centre. The centre, which depends on the Ministry of Defence, produced around 60 prostheses a month from the time it was opened. The ICRC had funded and supervised rehabilitation work on the premises under an agreement signed in December 1997.

The cooperation agreement on the ICRC’s prosthetic/orthotic activities in northern Iraq was also renewed in 1998.

Throughout the year the ICRC continued to run its component workshop in Baghdad. It also provided technical and financial support for four Ministry of Health limb-fitting centres in Baghdad, Basra and Najaf and for a Iraqi Red Crescent centre in Mosul.

The ICRC launched an information campaign on activities relating to amputees with the support of the Iraqi Red Crescent and the Ministry of Health. Awareness-raising tours were organized and documentation was distributed.

The ICRC also stepped up its efforts to familiarize the Iraqi population with its activities. It signed an agreement with the Ministry of Information and Culture to spread knowledge of the ICRC’s activities and mandate among schoolchildren by means of a magazine. In addition, a news bulletin was published in Arabic, Kurdish and English for the general public and the national and international organizations working in the country.

Under an agreement with the Iraqi National Olympic Committee, 650,000 lottery tickets were printed with inserts describing the ICRC’s activities in Iraq. This was supplemented by a promotional spot shown daily on television.

Cooperation between the ICRC and the Iraqi Red Crescent essentially involved assistance programmes – provision of medical and surgical supplies to the country’s health facilities, support for the Iraqi Red Crescent’s prosthetic/orthotic workshop in Mosul, and non-food aid for displaced persons in northern Iraq.

Efforts were also made in the area of preparing National Societies for emergency and conflict situations in order to optimize operational capacity.

Cooperation relating to the restoration of family ties continued. The ICRC carried out an assessment at the various branches of the National Society with a view
- repatriated to their respective countries, in February, 6 people who had entered Iraq illegally;
- visited, at the Abu Ghraib centre, 78 nationals of countries without diplomatic representation;
- carried out, in northern Iraq, 98 visits to 35 places of detention where it saw 1,516 people detained for security reasons or in connection with the fighting between the various Kurdish factions;
- provided ad hoc aid for detainees visited in northern Iraq;
- issued 968 travel documents for refugees;
- supplied ad hoc material assistance to the most needy groups of people displaced by the fighting since 1994 in the northern governorates (8,000 families in total);
- provided emergency assistance for people displaced by recent fighting in the same region (600 families);
- during the Desert Fox air strikes, provided 4 hospitals in Baghdad and a dozen others elsewhere in the country with emergency medical and surgical supplies sufficient to treat 500 war-wounded;
- rehabilitated a hospital in Tikrit damaged by the air attacks;
- continued throughout the year to furnish medical supplies for hospitals across Iraq;
- supplied some 20 health facilities in northern Iraq with surgical material sufficient to treat around 2,000 war-wounded during the year;
- continued to provide support for 4 government prosthetic/orthotic centres (in Baghdad, Basra and Najaf), the Iraqi Red Crescent centre in Mosul and its own centre in Arbil (northern Iraq);
- produced, in its workshop in Baghdad, 3,096 prostheses (1,699 of them for victims of anti-personnel mines), 2,733 orthoses and 136 pairs of elbow crutches;
- contributed to the training of technicians from all over the country, and held a course at the Institute of Medical Technology in Baghdad on the production of polypropylene prostheses under an agreement signed with the Ministry of Education;
- completed about 50 projects involving water treatment and distribution plants across the country and provided the equipment and products necessary for maintenance and construction work on the installations, carried out in cooperation with the Iraqi water boards;
- continued to support the 3 branches of the National Society in northern Iraq, in particular in providing emergency aid for displaced families;
- gave support to the Iraqi Red Crescent limb-fitting centre in Mosul;
- signed an agreement with the Iraqi Red Crescent on the dissemination of humanitarian principles whereby volunteers will be trained in this area as of 1999;
- carried out an assessment of the National Society's activities to restore family ties, so as to upgrade on-the-job training of specialized staff, and in the area of preparedness for emergency and conflict situations;
- presented the ICRC's activities and mandate to schoolchildren in a magazine designed especially for them;
- printed descriptions of the ICRC's activities in Iraq on 650,000 lottery tickets, and produced complementary spots shown daily on Iraqi television;
- published a news bulletin for the general public in Arabic, Kurdish and English.
northern Iraq

to setting up a plan of action in 1999. An agreement on the dissemination of humanitarian principles was signed at the end of the year.

The new President of the Iraqi Red Crescent was received at ICRC headquarters in October.

Matters relating to the aftermath of the Iran/Iraq conflict and the Gulf war are dealt with in separate sections.13

The beginning of the year was relatively calm in northern Iraq because of the dialogue initiated by the PUK* and the KDP* with a view to reconciliation between the two factions. Towards the end of May the Turkish armed forces, which back the KDP, carried out military operations against the PKK.* Sporadic clashes continued up to November, when full-scale fighting resumed. The military operations took place mainly to the north of Arbil in relatively sparsely populated areas, and thus had a limited effect on the civilian population. Nevertheless, around 600 families were forced to flee the combat zones and had to be given emergency assistance (see below).

On 17 September the KDP and the PUK signed an agreement in Washington for the establishment of a joint provisional government in advance of fresh elections. The agreement also provided for the withdrawal of the PKK from Iraqi soil, the release of detainees arrested for political reasons and the return of displaced persons to their places of origin.

Throughout the year the ICRC made recommendations to its contacts concerning respect for the civilian population on the part of fighters of all the parties involved.

Delegates continued to visit civilian and military detainees in many places of detention in northern Iraq. The number of detainees dropped sharply following several releases in early 1998, and conditions of detention improved as a result. The ICRC provided the detainees visited with ad hoc assistance.

Following the clashes between Kurdish factions, surgical material sufficient to treat around 2,000 war-wounded was handed over to some 20 health facilities in the region.

Although the clashes occurred in sparsely populated areas, they forced hundreds of civilians to seek refuge further south. With the cooperation of volunteers from local branches of the Iraqi Red Crescent, the ICRC distributed emergency supplies to displaced persons who had received no aid from the authorities or other humanitarian organizations.

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13 See pp. 289-292.

* PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

* KDP: Kurdish Democratic Party

* PKK: Kurdish Workers' Party
AFTERMATH OF THE IRAN/IRAQ WAR

At the beginning of 1998, ten years after the end of the conflict between Iran and Iraq, several thousand Iraqi prisoners of war were still under the responsibility of the Iranian authorities.

The ICRC, which visited some of them in previous years, has constantly called upon the parties since 1988 to abide by the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention of 1949 and hence to repatriate these men. The resumption of dialogue between Iran and Iraq on the POW question and the issue of missing persons resulted in very significant progress in 1998.

A major repatriation operation took place between 2 and 7 April, when 5,584 Iraqi POWs held in Iran and three Iranian POWs and another 316 Iranian detainees were repatriated under ICRC auspices. ICRC delegates were able to check the identity of the prisoners and to interview each of them in private so as to ensure that they were returning to their respective countries of their own free will.

With a view to finding a humanitarian solution to the problem of the remaining prisoners, the ICRC informed the parties that its delegates would have to be granted authorization to interview the men in private in order to ascertain whether or not they wished to be repatriated.

At the request of the Iranian authorities, a team of six delegates was based in Iran in August to conduct such interviews and oversee the repatriations. It remained on the spot until the end of the year. By 9 December the delegates had spoken in private to 3,497 POWs. The majority decided not to return to Iraq.

On 16 December the ICRC repatriated to Iraq 196 Iraqi POWs and 16 nationals of other countries. It also repatriated the mortal remains of an Iraqi POW who died at the end of 1998. The ICRC had had no access to most of these prisoners during their captivity. Further repatriation operations were planned for 1999.

In 1998 some progress was made in ascertaining the fate of those unaccounted for since the conflict between Iran and Iraq. Bilateral discussions between the two countries revealed a willingness to resolve this issue, which affects tens of thousands of families without news of their relatives. The ICRC did not take part in these discussions. According to reports in the Iranian press, around 27,000 exhumations were carried out in Iran in 1998 for identification purposes. The two countries organized several operations to repatriate remains without the involvement of the ICRC.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- repatriated, between 2 and 7 April, 5,584 Iraqi POWs from Iran and 3 Iraqi POWs and another 316 Iranian detainees from Iraq, after having checked their identity and ascertained that they were returning to their respective countries of their own free will;

- repatriated, on 16 December, 196 Iraqi POWs and the mortal remains of 1 Iraqi POW, and 16 nationals of other countries, in accordance with the same procedures;

- interviewed in private, between August and the end of December, another 3,497 Iraqi POWs still in Iran to determine whether or not they wished to be repatriated;

- processed 157 tracing requests and issued 195 detention certificates.
AFTERMATH OF THE GULF WAR

In October 1998 the UN Security Council extended the mandate of UNIKOM* until 7 April 1999.

The Tripartite Commission,14 chaired by the ICRC, held three meetings in Geneva in 1998 with a view to resolving the matter of persons unaccounted for since the occupation of Kuwait and the 1991 hostilities. Nine meetings of the Technical Sub-Committee, also chaired by the ICRC, were held in the demilitarized zone on the Iraq-Kuwait border.

In the same context a Swiss expert appointed by the ICRC at the request of the parties went to Iraq to carry out a fact-finding mission in the area where an aircraft believed to belong to the Saudi armed forces crashed during the Gulf war. The expert found that the aircraft did in fact belong to the Saudi armed forces. A team is to travel to the spot in early 1999 to identify the pilot’s remains.

In both Iraq and Kuwait the ICRC continued to monitor the treatment and conditions of detention of persons detained in connection with the Gulf war.

In Kuwait it visited detainees having no diplomatic protection, mainly Jordanians, Sudanese, Yemenites, Palestinians without travel documents and stateless persons. ICRC delegates visited people subject to expulsion orders and staying in transit camps, making sure that their departure for countries of resettlement took place under proper conditions (that is, that they were permitted to leave with their families and having had the opportunity to settle their personal affairs). The ICRC ensured that such people were not expelled to countries where they had reason to fear persecution. The Talha transit camp was closed in July.

Following representations by the ICRC delegation in Jordan, a family visit was organized in May for the relatives of Jordanian detainees held in Kuwait. Five Jordanian detainees were released by the Kuwaiti authorities and were repatriated when their relatives returned to Jordan.

The ICRC intervened on behalf of an Iraqi seaman detained in Kuwait after the inspection in March – on account of the embargo – of the Romanian freighter on which he was working.

In Iraq the ICRC also visited people without diplomatic protection held at the Abu Ghraib detention centre near Baghdad.

Two Saudi nationals and two Kuwaitis detained for entering Iraq illegally were released and repatriated, in February and March respectively, under ICRC auspices via the Safwan border crossing point between Iraq and Kuwait.

**Footnotes:**

14 The Tripartite Commission is made up of representatives of Iraq, France, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

* UNIKOM: United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission
The ICRC continued to arrange for the exchange of Red Cross messages between members of families separated since the Gulf war. It also issued travel documents for people who had been accepted by host countries but had no identity papers.

IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in Iraq, visited 78 civilian nationals of countries not represented in Iraq since the Gulf war and held at the Abu Ghraib detention centre near Baghdad;
- in Kuwait, visited 232 detainees in 7 places of detention;
- organized, in May, a visit for 25 members of Jordanian families to their relatives held in Kuwait and repatriated 5 detainees released on that occasion;
- repatriated via the Safwan border crossing point, in February and March respectively, 2 Kuwaitis and 2 Saudis who had been held for illegally entering Iraq;
- chaired 3 meetings of the Tripartite Commission and 9 meetings of the Technical Sub-Committee to ascertain the fate of people unaccounted for since the occupation of Kuwait and the Gulf war;
- forwarded 10,744 Red Cross messages in one direction and 9,189 in the other between families in Kuwait and relatives from whom they were separated as a result of the Gulf war;
- exchanged 22,000 Red Cross messages between families in Iraq and their relatives abroad, in connection with the Gulf war;
- issued 20 travel documents for people leaving to resettle in host countries, and 112 detention certificates.
KUWAIT
Regional delegation
(Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen)

In 1998 the regional delegation gave priority to efforts to resolve the humanitar­ian problems arising from the Gulf war, and in particular to ascertain the fate of persons still unaccounted for. The ICRC maintained contact with the Kuwaiti authorities, especially the National Committee for Missing and POW Affairs, on these matters.

The ICRC continued to visit places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministries of the Interior, Defence and Social Affairs.

The ICRC made sustained efforts to promote humanitarian principles and rules in the region. Two sessions of a course on humanitarian law were attended by about 80 law students from the University of Kuwait City.

As regards dissemination among the armed forces, a large number of seminars were organized in the Gulf region in 1998. In Kuwait an initial seminar on 18 March brought together 14 participants at the Al-Jiwan military camp. In September a second seminar was held at the Command and Staff College and was attended by 70 officers from Kuwait and other countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Ten American and British officers also took part.

Particular attention was paid to the media, and a large number of articles were published in the regional press in English and in Arabic.

As previously, the regional delegation maintained regular contact with the OIC, whose headquarters are in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in accordance with a cooperation agreement signed by the two organizations.

The ICRC's permanent Vice-President, accompanied by the regional delegate, visited Riyadh from 29 May to 1 June at the invitation of the Saudi Minister for Foreign Affairs. He met a number of high-ranking dignitaries, including several members of the royal family, and the Chief of Staff of the armed forces.

During the talks held on that occasion the Vice-President raised matters of mutual interest, such as the problem of persons unaccounted for since the Gulf war and the need to increase awareness of humanitarian law in the region. The visit also provided the ICRC with an opportunity to express its wish to consolidate existing links and to broaden and diversify its funding by enlisting the support of other countries in the region.

15 See pp. 291-292.
* OIC: Organisation of the Islamic Conference
activities in Qatar

The Vice-President also met the new President of the Saudi Arabian Red Crescent Society.

For the first time since 1992, a course on the law of armed conflict was held at the Command and Staff College from 21 to 24 November. The event brought together around 20 officers, mainly from the Saudi air force and navy.

The Islamic Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held in Doha, the capital of Qatar, in March. The ICRC's permanent Vice-President and the regional delegate based in Kuwait attended the meeting, and the Vice-President had talks with the foreign ministers of several countries of the region.16

Following approaches made in July with a view to visiting security detainees in Qatar, the authorities agreed in principle to the request. Two rounds of talks were held in October and November to discuss procedures for the visits.

From 17 to 21 October, 30 officers of the Qatar armed forces attended a series of conferences and seminars on the law of armed conflict. A similar course was held for 120 cadets of the military academy on 19 October.

On 13 October Qatar ratified the Ottawa treaty prohibiting anti-personnel mines.

In May/June and November the ICRC carried out two series of visits to places of detention in Bahrain. Discussions had been held in November 1997 after the previous series of visits and were due to be resumed at the end of 1998 on the follow-up to the ICRC's recommendations.

The aid programme for mentally ill detainees in three prisons in Yemen, launched in 1995, continued in 1998. The project was delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross, which provided an expatriate and funding, and was implemented with the cooperation of the Yemen Red Crescent Society and the support of the Ministries of the Interior and of Health. Under the programme local doctors and nurses gave medical and psychiatric care to inmates in the prisons in Ibb, Sana'a and Taiz.

Major work was carried out in places of detention in Aden, Ibb, Hodeida, Sana’a and Taiz to improve hygiene conditions and water supplies.

Yemen ratified the Ottawa treaty prohibiting anti-personnel landmines on 1 September.

visits to detainees in Bahrain

aid for prisons in Yemen

16 In particular those of Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- in Bahrain, carried out two visits to 13 places of detention, seeing 1,327 detainees;
- in Kuwait, visited 232 detainees in 7 places of detention;
- in Yemen, carried out sanitation work at 5 prisons to ensure adequate water supplies and to improve hygiene conditions;
- continued to cooperate with the Yemen Red Crescent in providing assistance for detainees under the aid project for mentally ill inmates delegated to the Netherlands Red Cross;
- in Saudi Arabia, organized a seminar on the law of war for around 20 officers;
- in Kuwait, held courses for 14 cadets at a military camp and for 70 officers from Kuwait and other countries of the Gulf;
- gave several talks on humanitarian law for UNIKOM personnel;
- in Kuwait, held courses for around 80 university law students;
- in Qatar, conducted a series of lectures and seminars for 30 military officers and 120 cadets;
- gave a presentation on humanitarian law during a major television debate organized by the Qatar-based Jezirah Satellite Television station;
- in Yemen, maintained its support for National Society programmes aimed at spreading knowledge of humanitarian law and principles among the population.
North Africa

EGYPT

As in the previous year the ICRC delegation in Cairo maintained and extended its contacts with the Egyptian authorities, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the armed forces, and with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society, university circles and the media. It explained the specific features of its treaty-based mandate and its right of initiative as laid down in the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, with a view to gaining better acceptance of its work in the event of internal disturbances.

In 1998 a special effort was made to promote the implementation of international humanitarian law. On 2 and 3 March a round table was held in Cairo under the auspices of the Egyptian Red Crescent and with the support of the ICRC. It brought together officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Interior, Health, Social Affairs and Information, and representatives of parliament, various universities and the media.

The ICRC’s regional promotion office, staffed by an Arabic-speaking delegate and five Egyptian employees, worked throughout the year to produce teaching materials in Arabic and to provide support for the activities of the region’s delegations to promote the humanitarian rules and principles. In 1998 the delegate travelled to Iraq, Israel and the occupied and autonomous territories, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia. Contacts were also maintained with the Arabic-language media in London and Paris.

The ICRC’s efforts to familiarize the region’s military and police circles with the law of armed conflict continued. The delegate to the armed and security forces visited ten countries (Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Syria), where he organized a large number of seminars on the basics of humanitarian law and workshops to train instructors who in turn would give training in humanitarian law to their respective forces.

In Egypt a workshop was held for officers of the Nasser Academy in Cairo and teaching materials were produced.

One of the radio serials produced by the ICRC won five gold medals at the Cairo Radio and Television Festival. Episodes were broadcast daily by the BBC* Arabic Service during the month of Ramadan. The serial is firmly rooted in the local social and cultural environment and was a great success among the public.

* BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- issued travel documents for 1,484 refugees (mainly Ethiopians, Somalis, and Sudanese) accepted by host countries;
- exchanged 692 Red Cross messages between the members of separated families;
- took part in a round table on the implementation of humanitarian law held under the auspices of the Egyptian Red Crescent in Cairo in March;
- took part in a basic training course on action in emergency situations held in Zeinhom, Cairo, from 31 May to 4 June for 20 National Society members from Cairo and 8 governorates;
- provided funds for an Egyptian Red Crescent doctor to attend the HELP* course in Geneva in May;
- organized, from 14 to 16 July, a seminar to train 20 members of the National Society youth section in Cairo and 9 governorates in the dissemination of humanitarian law and principles (for the first time, staff who had previously received such training helped with the teaching);
- produced a strip cartoon for young people highlighting the humanitarian implications of war, which was published in a magazine with a circulation of 100,000;
- produced a radio serial on the rules of humanitarian law which was broadcast on stations with large audiences, in particular the BBC Arabic Service and the Franco-Moroccan station Medi 1;*
- produced a 5-minute video film on water and war;
- produced a series of 12 posters on the law of armed conflict for the armed forces;
- in Cairo in February/March, held a seminar followed by a workshop on the law of armed conflict for 29 officers and instructors of the Nasser Academy;
- held 2 conferences, in March and October, at the National Centre for Middle East Studies for around 20 participants from academic, government and diplomatic circles;
- gave a presentation on issues relating to humanitarian law in the Middle East during a training seminar organized by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in July for students of economics and political science at the University of Cairo.

* Medi 1: Radio Méditerranée internationale
HELP: Health Emergencies in Large Populations
The Franco-Moroccan station Medi 1 also aired the radio serial at peak listening times. This station, which broadcasts in Arabic and French, is picked up throughout North Africa and southern Europe.

In 1998 a particularly large number of refugees – most of them Ethiopian, Somali and Sudanese – left Egypt to resettle in host countries (principally Australia, Canada and the United States). The ICRC provided travel documents for these people, the majority of whom had no identity papers. As previously, the delegation's work in this regard was carried out in close cooperation with UNHCR.
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

TUNIS

Regional delegation (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco/Western Sahara, Tunisia)

The extreme violence which persisted in Algeria and the plight of prisoners captured during the conflict in the Western Sahara were the ICRC's principal concerns in 1998. The organization made repeated representations – some of them at a very high level – in an attempt to find a humanitarian solution for the victims of both situations.

As regards the implementation of humanitarian law in the region, the ICRC pursued its efforts to make governments aware of the need to take the relevant legislative measures.

Sustained efforts were made to promote knowledge of humanitarian law and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the countries of North Africa, in particular among the armed forces and in schools and universities.

Close contacts were maintained with the region's National Red Crescent Societies, in particular in the areas of dissemination of humanitarian law, the training of their members and volunteers and the development of their operational capacity.

In 1998 Algeria was once again the scene of extreme violence, which left thousands of civilians dead or wounded. This was a cause of grave concern for the ICRC, whose role is to protect and assist the victims of such situations.

On 23 February the ICRC sent the Algerian authorities a diplomatic note informing them of its readiness to take action in several domains (visits to detainees held in connection with the violence, dissemination of humanitarian law and support for the activities of the Algerian Red Crescent in aid of the victims). The note also proposed that the ICRC Director of Operations should visit Algiers for discussions.

On 18 March the ICRC President received the Algerian Minister for Foreign Affairs at the organization's headquarters in Geneva; he reiterated the ICRC's disquiet and its wish to be able to take action in accordance with its customary procedures. The ICRC regional delegate in Tunis travelled several times to Algiers for talks to pave the way for the arrival in the Algerian capital of the Director of Operations. In May the authorities agreed in principle to the visit.

Following the statements made to the United Nations Human Rights Committee by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria, as
Cooperation with the National Society

aftermath of the Morocco/Western Sahara conflict

reported by various press agencies, the ICRC issued a press release on 21 July stating that the purpose of the visit by the Director of Operations would be to discuss the conditions and arrangements for the possible resumption of ICRC activities in Algeria, which were interrupted in June 1992.

The visit took place from 8 to 11 November. The Director of Operations had talks with the Director of Multilateral Affairs at the Foreign Ministry, the Director of Civil Liberties at the Ministry of Interior and several other high-ranking government officials, including the Director of Prison Administration at the Ministry of Justice. The discussions focused on ICRC access to people detained in connection with the violence. The regional delegate followed up the talks, travelling to Algiers in December for the purpose.

At the end of the year the ICRC was still awaiting a formal reply to its proposals from the authorities.

For the third consecutive year the ICRC funded the Algerian Red Crescent's programme to assist vulnerable people during the month of Ramadan (distribution of food baskets and soup to around 20,000 beneficiaries). In addition, the ICRC supported the National Society's project to help children traumatized by the violence, in particular the "beach for all" operation and the summer camp, which was attended by 1,800 children in 1998. The development of this programme was discussed during a visit to Algeria in August by a delegate based in Tunis, accompanied by an ICRC doctor. The Algerian Red Crescent proposed setting up a project for the psychological rehabilitation of traumatized children. At the end of the year the two organizations concluded an agreement in principle on the question.

The ICRC also discussed with the National Society the possibility of disseminating the rules of humanitarian law, in particular among the armed and security forces. The ICRC Director of Operations raised the matter during his visit to Algiers at the beginning of November.

With a view to possible cooperation, the ICRC maintained regular contact with the other components of the Movement concerned about the humanitarian implications of the situation in Algeria.

For over 20 years the repercussions of the conflict in the Western Sahara have been felt by tens of thousands of people, including around 1,800 Moroccan prisoners. The UN settlement plan had provided for the repatriation of all the captives after the registration of everyone eligible to vote in a referendum on self-determination for the people of the Western Sahara. The plan thus linked the issue of the prisoners to a political settlement. The referendum, which had been postponed several times since 1992, was set for 7 December 1998 by the UN.

Secretary-General. Fresh disagreement arose between the parties, however, as to the identification of three tribes, and the Secretary-General deferred the referendum until December 1999.

Year after year the ICRC has reiterated that under the provisions of humanitarian law all prisoners must be repatriated as soon as active hostilities cease.

In 1998, apart from the some 1,800 Moroccan prisoners still held by the Polisario Front, 84 people released in April 1997 were still awaiting repatriation because Morocco was opposed as a matter of principle to any repatriation which did not encompass all the detainees. The ICRC is extremely concerned about the plight of these men, most of whom were captured between 1978 and 1982. For them, and for their families, the long years of captivity without any prospect of a humanitarian solution are causing great distress, aggravated by the advanced age and poor health of many of the captives.

The ICRC, which visits the prisoners regularly, has spared no effort in recent years to secure the unconditional release and repatriation of the prisoners in accordance with humanitarian law. In 1998 the ICRC stepped up its representations to all the parties concerned in order to find a humanitarian solution as quickly as possible. It reminded them that it was available to supervise the repatriation of all the prisoners held in connection with the conflict in the Western Sahara.

In May the ICRC Delegate-General for the Middle East and North Africa travelled to Rabat for a series of high-level talks. In particular he met the ministerial delegate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Commandant of the Royal Gendarmerie.

In August the ICRC President wrote to King Hassan II of Morocco to draw his attention to the tragic situation of the Moroccan prisoners, especially the men released by the Polisario Front in April 1997 but still not repatriated.

Through its permanent Vice-President, the ICRC again expressed its serious concern to the Moroccan Minister for Foreign Affairs during talks in Durban, South Africa, on 3 September on the occasion of the 12th Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries.

On 24 November the Moroccan Prime Minister was received at headquarters in Geneva by the ICRC President. Mr Sommaruga once again emphasized the urgent need to find a humanitarian solution allowing for the repatriation of all prisoners held in connection with the conflict.

Talks were also held throughout the year with representatives of the Polisario Front in Algiers and Geneva and at the UN in New York.

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18 In April 1997, following a visit to Tindouf by a special UN envoy, 85 vulnerable (elderly and seriously ill) prisoners were released by the Polisario Front. One of them subsequently died.
In April/May and December a team of delegates, including a doctor, visited 1,783 Moroccans held by the Polisario Front, including the 84 former prisoners released in April 1997 and awaiting repatriation ever since.

The ICRC handed over medicines and medical supplies to treat the detainees, some of whom were suffering from chronic conditions. Leisure items were distributed to bring the detainees out of their isolation. In addition, each of them received a parcel containing hygiene products and clothing and was given the opportunity to write Red Cross messages to his family.

At the end of the year it was decided to increase medical assistance for the prisoners pending a general repatriation.

The ICRC also supplied a consignment of medicines for the Sahrawi refugee population, which was living in very precarious conditions.

A health coordinator from Geneva and the information officer from the Tunis regional delegation were in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya from 1 to 6 November to attend the Sixth Medical Congress organized by the Libyan General Secretariat of Health and Social Security and the Libyan Red Crescent. The possibility of setting up a prosthetic/orthotic centre in Libya, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the National Society, was broached with the head of the medical equipment association, which is under the responsibility of the Social Security Secretariat.

On 3 November they took part in a round table that brought together around 30 relief officials from National Society branches and a representative of the Federation. The ICRC representatives gave a talk on war surgery. The ICRC also attended, together with representatives of the Federation and WHO,* another meeting on disaster preparedness and management. In addition, the delegates met the Dean of the Law Faculty at the University of Benghazi, with whom they discussed cooperation projects.

A round table entitled "Teaching and research on international humanitarian law – assessment and implementation" was organized by the ICRC, with the cooperation of the Moroccan Red Crescent, and the Moulay Ismail University in Meknès on 23 and 24 April. It was attended by about 30 people representing eight of the country's 11 law faculties. The participants proposed, through their recommendations, the introduction of courses on humanitarian law into the university programme, the setting-up of a commission responsible for implementation strategy and, for purposes of research, the establishment of an inter-university database.

* WHO: World Health Organization
In January the ICRC dissemination delegate based in Tunis travelled to Morocco to take part in a training session for human rights instructors organized by the Department of Human Rights, which is attached to the Prime Minister's office.

At the beginning of February there were demonstrations in Mauritania to protest against allegations of slavery and the arrest of human rights campaigners. They led to around ten arrests. On 9 March the ICRC sent a diplomatic note to the Mauritanian authorities with a view to visiting all persons detained in connection with those events, and an ICRC delegate based in Tunis was in Nouakchott from 24 March to 1 April to follow the matter up. However, the detainees were released under a presidential amnesty.

A delegate to the armed and security forces travelled to Nouakchott to hold a course on the law of armed conflict from 20 to 27 May for 31 officers of the National Guard. He also gave a presentation on humanitarian law to section heads and staff officers. The ICRC was involved in producing a handbook on humanitarian law for the Mauritanian armed forces and covered printing costs.

During the year the ICRC continued its cooperation with the Mauritanian Red Crescent. Together with representatives of two participating National Societies and of the Federation, it attended the Mauritanian Red Crescent's General Assembly, the first since 1983. The assembly took important decisions aimed at improving the way the National Society functions. The ICRC also took part in a course for senior National Society staff and two workshops on the dissemination of humanitarian law.

In Tunisia the regional delegation took part in several meetings, courses and seminars throughout the year on the dissemination of humanitarian law and to spread knowledge of the Movement.

One of the most important of these was the seminar organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and the Tunisian Red Crescent in Tunis in February, entitled "International humanitarian law and the teaching of peace and tolerance". It was attended by around 100 representatives of university circles, including the deans of Tunisia’s four law faculties and a number of professors. On that occasion the Minister of Higher Education announced the establishment of a diploma in higher specialized studies in international humanitarian law at the country’s law and medical faculties. In May a similar session brought together around 50 primary school inspectors.

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19 The Finnish Red Cross and the Swedish Red Cross.
IN 1998 THE ICRC:

- visited, in April/May and December, 1,783 Moroccan prisoners held by the Polisario Front, including 84 former prisoners released in April 1997 and still awaiting repatriation;
- restored and maintained contact between Moroccan prisoners and their families by forwarding 16,575 Red Cross messages and 262 family parcels via the Algerian Red Crescent;
- handed over 1,884 parcels of clothing and hygiene items to the Moroccan prisoners visited;
- provided medical assistance (in particular insulin) for the Moroccan prisoners and for the Sahrawi population;
- in Algeria, gave financial support for the programmes run by the National Society to assist vulnerable population groups (baskets of food during Ramadan and soup for 20,000 people), and to hold a summer camp for children traumatized by the violence;
- in Benghazi in November, attended the Sixth Medical Congress of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya at the invitation of the Libyan General Secretariat of Health and Social Security and the Libyan Red Crescent, and also a round table on relief organized by the National Society;
- arranged for the Director of Operations of the Libyan Red Crescent to come to Geneva in May to attend a HELP course;
- provided training, at ICRC headquarters in March, for two staff members of the Libyan Red Crescent in tracing procedures and the restoration of family ties;
- in Tataouine in January, attended a Tunisian Red Crescent seminar on the ICRC's principles and activities held for 60 members of youth sections;
- in Morocco in January, took part in a training session for human rights instructors organized by the Department of Human Rights attached to the Prime Minister's office, giving a presentation on the dissemination of humanitarian law and the problems involved in teaching;
- organized, in cooperation with the Moroccan Red Crescent and jointly with the Moulay Ismail University in Meknès, a round table in April on "Teaching and researching international humanitarian law - assessment and implementation" which brought together around 30 people representing 8 of the country's 11 law faculties;
- provided the documentation centre of the Moroccan Red Crescent with regular supplies of information material;
- in Nouadhibou, Mauritania, on 6 and 7 December, conducted 2 workshops on dissemination for around 60 secondary school pupils in their final year and 80 local and regional staff (civil servants, military personnel, gendarmes, nurses, etc.) and students;
- took part, in Mauritania from 11 to 17 June, in a workshop co-funded by the ICRC and the Faculty of Law and Economics of the University of Nouakchott on the teaching of humanitarian law for around 30 participants (students and professors, lawyers, journalists);
- held, in Mauritania at the end of May, a basic course on the law of armed conflict for 31 officers of the National Guard and gave a presentation to section heads and officers of the army general staff;
- in Tunis in February, attended a seminar organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and the Tunisian Red Crescent on "International humanitarian law and the teaching of peace and tolerance", which brought together about 100 representatives of university circles, including the deans of Tunisia's four law faculties and some professors; in May attended a similar session for around 50 primary school inspectors;
- in Tunisia in November, gave a talk on the ICRC and humanitarian law at a training session of the Arab Institute of Human Rights for representatives of NGOs of various Arab countries.
How many children go through life haunted by images like this? Combatants throughout the world flout basic rules of humanity causing unspeakable suffering among civilians. The ICRC's efforts to promote compliance with international humanitarian law include participation in high-level legal conferences, programmes for schoolchildren, face-to-face dialogue with fighters and seminars for training officers to the armed forces.
1998 aims in the fields of international law, communication and the Movement

In 1998, as in previous years, the world was beset by conflicts as complex as they were cruel. The struggle for survival of populations left to fend for themselves because of the abdication or the impotence of their authorities, the involvement of children in hostilities, the difficulties encountered by humanitarian organizations having to deal with combatants who no longer show respect for anything—all these phenomena were on the increase.

Against this background the ICRC’s primary concern was, as always, to try to reach all victims of armed conflict. However, the prevailing situation also strengthened its resolve to develop, in peacetime, its activities to enhance knowledge of and respect for the basic principles of international humanitarian law: compassion for those in distress, solidarity, and respect for human dignity.

Such an aim opens up boundless possibilities, so the ICRC put firm emphasis on the clear definition of priorities and the evaluation of results. It also carried out an internal reorganization, bringing together its information activities and those relating to the dissemination of humanitarian law so as to boost synergy between the two areas, which converge in certain respects.

The five main objectives pursued in 1998 were to strengthen contacts with armed forces and extend them to the police; to work more closely with young people; to promote national measures for the implementation of humanitarian law; to encourage reflection on humanitarian law and support international efforts in this and related areas; and to strengthen cooperation with the National Societies.

The increasing number of situations of internal strife in which armed forces take action but which are not covered by humanitarian law has highlighted the need to examine the humanitarian issues facing the military and the police in such cases. In 1998, in response to growing demand, the ICRC invested more effort in this area, producing teaching materials and holding training courses while at the same time stepping up its traditional activities to provide armed forces with instruction in humanitarian law.

While armed forces remain a priority, the ICRC constantly explores ways of making sure that the basics of humanitarian law are understood by all those involved in armed conflict, and believes it is essential to begin with young people. In view of the success of pilot programmes conducted in various countries with the agreement of the relevant ministries, the ICRC has decided to develop such programmes and to build up its expertise in this area, seeking the support and cooperation of specialized international organizations and working with national organizations, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in particular, so as to ensure that the humanitarian message is tailored to the local culture and to guarantee continuity.

The constructive way in which the ICRC approaches States in order to support their endeavours to develop national measures for the implementation of
humanitarian law is highly appreciated and has yielded many positive results. It has also led to international cooperation, notably within the framework of a study on penal legislation.

The ICRC spared no effort in contributing to the work leading to the establishment of the International Criminal Court, which it sees as a major advance in the drive to put an end to impunity. It also made progress in its wide-ranging study on customary international humanitarian law, which should give a clearer picture of how this law is applied in practice and generate new ideas concerning its implementation and development. The fact that the study is being carried out all over the world has had the welcome effect of stimulating interest in the subject in many regions.

Together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC made a major effort in 1998 to provide training for the implementation of the new cooperation agreement between all the Movement's components. Since there are National Societies in all the countries in the world and those Societies support the ICRC's emergency operations by putting material and human resources at its disposal, the spirit of partnership embodied in this agreement is vital to the Movement's future. The ICRC therefore stepped up its cooperation with the Federation with a view to developing a strong and independent National Society in every country.

Yves Sandoz
Director for International Law and Communication
IMPLEMENTATION OF AND RESPECT FOR THE LAW

Through its humanitarian work, the ICRC endeavours to provide protection and assistance to victims of armed conflict. 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.

Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law

Promoting respect for humanitarian law and ensuring its implementation at the national level continued to be an important and urgent task for the ICRC. The organization's Advisory Service on International Humanitarian Law advises governments on the implementation of humanitarian law and adherence to humanitarian law treaties. To achieve its objectives the Service works in close cooperation with governments, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, international organizations and specialized institutions.

In 1998, the Advisory Service organized a series of seminars around the world. These events brought together representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Defence, Health, the Interior and so forth, members of parliament, the armed forces and civil defence corps, and representatives of academic and other interested circles. They were organized in close cooperation with the host countries' National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society and provided an opportunity to present activities carried out in other regions. National seminars took place in Mali (19-20 February), Egypt (2 and 3 March), Bangladesh (10 April), Argentina (16 April), Belarus (21-23 April), Senegal (8 May), Cameroon (12 and 13 May),
Côte d'Ivoire (18-20 May), Armenia (2 June), Kyrgyzstan (27-29 July), Indonesia (19 and 20 August), and Estonia (29 September). Two regional training courses on national implementation of humanitarian law were held in Moscow for civil servants of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States on 9-13 February and 13-16 October. Similar training courses for members of national committees on humanitarian law were also held in Senegal (5-13 March), Côte d'Ivoire (25-28 May) and Benin (25-27 November).

During the year under review the Advisory Service cooperated with various organizations on the issue of national implementation. A report on the progress made by States members of the Organization of American States was submitted to the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the Permanent Council on 12 March. Contacts were also pursued with the ad hoc Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which met in Moscow on 6-12 September. In addition, representatives of the Advisory Service attended a Council of Europe meeting to plan legal cooperation and cooperation in the field of human rights, held in Strasbourg on 14-16 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 provided technical assistance and advice on the drafting, adoption and amendment of such legislation. In 1998 it carried out this type of work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Moldova, Niger, Panama, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The Advisory Service also gathers and analyses information on new legislation and national case law. In 1998, for example, a law governing the use of the red cross, red crescent and other emblems was adopted in Colombia in May, and penal legislation was revised in order to ensure repression of war crimes in Peru (February), Tajikistan (May) and Yemen (July). Legislation on the use of antipersonnel landmines was enacted in Hungary (March), France (June), the United Kingdom (July) and Spain (October).

From 11 to 13 November, an international meeting of common law experts in humanitarian law and criminal law and procedure was held in Geneva by the Advisory Service on the subject of "Enforcing international humanitarian law at the national level: Criminal law and procedure". This meeting followed a similar event relating to civil law systems held in 1997, and was the beginning of a process of consultation with common law States which will involve regional meetings and other initiatives. The meeting was attended by over 30 national experts from common law countries, including judges, magistrates, prosecutors, lawyers and
academics. Their conclusions, on a range of legal issues, will be published in the report on the meeting and form the basis for guidelines for the enforcement of humanitarian law in common law countries.

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 national level. In 1998, such committees were set up in Canada, Georgia and Panama. There are now over 60 countries with national committees or similar bodies. Other countries are considering setting up their own committees, including Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, Mali, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Slovenia, United Kingdom and Venezuela. On 17 and 18 February, the first regional meeting of existing national committees and bodies in the process of being created in Central America was held in Panama. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information on the work of the committees and on implementation of humanitarian law in the region. Members of the Advisory Service also had talks with representatives of existing bodies worldwide.

During the year the Advisory Service published its second annual report1 covering its own activities and recent developments relating to national implementation of humanitarian law. It also produced guidelines on the issue of penal repression of violations of humanitarian law in civil law countries. These are reproduced in the form of fact sheets and form a kit on this specific issue which is available to law-makers seeking practical guidance.

International Criminal Court

In July 1998 there was a landmark event in the development of a more effective system for the repression of war crimes. After years of tireless effort, a Statute for an International Criminal Court (ICC) was finally adopted in Rome on 17 July after a vote in favour by 120 States (seven States voted against and 21 abstained). In taking this step States sent a clear message: the longstanding impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of international crimes has come to an end.

The ICRC was closely involved in issues directly related to its mandate in the negotiations in New York and in Rome, in its capacity as expert in and guardian of international humanitarian law. It encouraged States to establish an effective ICC, empowered to take all the measures necessary to fulfil its mandate. Accordingly, the ICRC took a strong position on three points: the definition of war crimes, the conditions for the exercise of jurisdiction of the Court, and the need for an independent prosecutor.

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On the first point the ICRC considered it essential that the Court have jurisdiction over both international and non-international armed conflicts, given that the majority of conflicts today are internal in nature. In particular, the ICRC insisted on the necessity for the Court to have jurisdiction over all serious violations of humanitarian law, which include the most serious violations of the 1977 Additional Protocols. The result of the Rome Conference on this point was satisfactory insofar as the Court was given competence to hear cases of war crimes committed in internal conflicts, although the list of war crimes covered is not comprehensive. The ICRC regrets in particular the lack of specific provisions designating the use of starvation as a method of warfare, indiscriminate attacks against civilians and the use of prohibited weapons as war crimes in internal conflicts. As for coverage of war crimes committed in international conflicts, no provisions are to be found on unjustifiable delay in the repatriation of prisoners of war or the launching of indiscriminate attacks affecting the civilian population or civilian property. The provision on weapons was also kept to a minimum.

The ICRC’s most serious disappointment arises from Article 124 of the Statute, which allows a State to declare that it does not accept the jurisdiction of the Court for a period of seven years with respect to war crimes alleged to have been committed by its nationals or on its territory.

On the issue of jurisdiction, the ICRC urged that the ICC should have automatic jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Accordingly, if a State became party to the Statute of the ICC but was unwilling or genuinely unable to prosecute, the Court would have automatic jurisdiction. The outcome was a compromise on this difficult issue. Certain preconditions have to be met before the Court can exercise its jurisdiction: States agreed that the Court could take up a case if the State where the crime occurred or of which the accused is a national is a party to the Statute. It is regrettable that jurisdiction was not extended to the State having custody of the suspect.

As regards the third point, it is noteworthy that the Prosecutor also has the power to initiate proceedings (in addition to States Parties and the Security Council, which can refer cases to the Prosecutor).

It is clear that the ICC will not replace national courts in the prosecution of international criminals, nor has it been set up to look at crimes committed in the past. States will continue to have primary responsibility for exercising criminal jurisdiction over those responsible for international crimes. The ICRC will therefore continue to provide States with technical support in adopting legislation for the repression of war crimes at the national level. The ICRC will actively promote ratification of the ICC Statute by a large number of States and hopes to take part in the work that still remains to be done before the Court is actually set up, in particular on the definition of the elements of crimes.
First periodical meeting on international humanitarian law

The States party to the Geneva Conventions held their first periodical meeting on general problems relating to the implementation of international humanitarian law in Geneva from 19 to 23 January 1998. The meeting was convened by the Swiss government in its capacity as depositary of the Conventions, pursuant to Resolution 1, para. 7, of the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (1995). It was attended by the representatives of 129 States Parties and 36 observers. Following consultations with the States Parties, two topics were selected for this initial meeting, namely respect for and security of the personnel of humanitarian organizations, and armed conflicts linked to the disintegration of State structures. The ICRC prepared a working document on each of these themes.

At the close of the meeting the Chairman drew up and presented a report on problems encountered in the implementation of humanitarian law in the areas considered, and some possible remedies. Since the meeting was informal no resolutions were adopted. During the discussions the States Parties reaffirmed the universal relevance of humanitarian law and reiterated their support for humanitarian organizations. However, they also stressed how important it was that such organizations respect the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence and accept the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster relief. It was agreed that there was a need to establish early warning systems and draw up a code of ethics covering arms exports; greater efforts were also needed to combat impunity. Lastly, the participants recommended that the work of the ICRC’s Advisory Service be extended and that efforts to spread knowledge of the humanitarian principles, particularly among young people, be stepped up.

Meeting of experts on general problems relating to the implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention

A meeting of experts was held in Geneva on 27 to 29 October 1998 to discuss general problems raised by the implementation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention). The meeting was convened by the Swiss authorities as one of a series of measures proposed by Switzerland pursuant to several UN General Assembly resolutions on the territories occupied by Israel. Representatives of 118 States Parties and 15 observer delegations attended the meeting.

At the request of the Swiss government, the ICRC prepared a working document for these talks, which were divided into three parts focusing in turn on the broad issue of protection of the civilian population in armed conflicts, protection
of the civilian population in occupied territories and measures for implementing humanitarian law. The relevance of this body of law was underlined, and it was generally agreed that the greatest problems arose not from any lack of appropriate rules but from the failure to apply existing law consistently and in good faith. At the close of the discussions the Chairman drew up a report to be sent to the UN Secretary-General, the States Parties and the observers attending the meeting of experts.

STRENGTHENING AND DEVELOPING THE LAW

Study on customary rules of international humanitarian law

In December 1995 the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent formally invited the ICRC "to prepare, with the assistance of experts on IHL representing various geographical regions and different legal systems, and in consultation with experts from governments and international organizations, a report on customary rules of IHL applicable in international and non-international armed conflicts, and to circulate the report to States and competent international bodies".

After a Plan of Action was drawn up in 1996 by the study's Steering Committee, composed of eminent academic experts in humanitarian law, research started towards the end of that year. The six areas covered by the study were: the principle of distinction; methods of warfare; use of weapons; specific protections; standards of treatment and human rights law applicable in armed conflict; and accountability and implementation.

The Steering Committee's decision to divide the work between research into national and international sources of State practice was fully implemented. Reports on the practice of some 50 States were prepared by national research teams, together with about 40 reports on recent armed conflicts. On this basis, and on the basis of their own research into international sources, six academic research teams, each of which concentrated on one of the six areas covered by the study, prepared consolidated reports. The consolidated reports contain a compilation of State practice organized according to subject-matter. On the basis of these consolidated reports the Steering Committee made an initial assessment as to which rules appeared to be customary. This assessment was carried out in the course of three meetings held in 1998, each dealing with two subjects of the study. The results of these meetings were summarized in six updated consolidated reports and six executive summaries, together with short commentaries explaining why a given rule was thought to be customary or otherwise.

In 1999, the Steering Committee will submit its initial assessment of the customary nature of the rules covered by the study to a group of government experts for review. Thereafter, the ICRC will have the task of drafting the final
report taking into account the opinions of the experts consulted, and will report on its work to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 1999.

Protection of internally displaced persons

The ICRC's major contribution to protection and assistance of internally displaced persons lies in its daily work in the field. By urging parties to armed conflicts to abide by their obligations under humanitarian law and seeking to provide all victims of armed conflict with humanitarian assistance, in 1998 the ICRC not only came to the aid of those who had been displaced but also endeavoured to maintain conditions which would allow people to remain in their homes. The ICRC also took part in a variety of international meetings held to discuss internal displacement, and continued to support the work of the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on internally displaced persons. It contributed to the drafting of a set of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which the Representative presented to the Commission on Human Rights in April 1998, and also worked to promote their use in the field.

Protection of children in armed conflicts

The plight of children in situations of armed conflict continued to be a cause of major concern for the ICRC. In addition to its traditional operational activities, it helped to raise awareness of the issue and participated in broader initiatives to alleviate their situation. Within the Movement, it contributed to efforts to implement the 1995 Plan of Action, which is designed to foster activities to protect and assist child victims of armed conflict and to promote the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation of children below the age of 18 years in hostilities.

Within the framework of the UN, the ICRC took part in the deliberations of the working group set up to examine the question of a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child concerning the involvement of children in armed conflict. It also prepared an analytical summary of the main points to which it attaches special importance, in particular that the protocol should prohibit recruitment and participation in hostilities of children below the age of 18, that the prohibition should cover both direct and indirect participation in hostilities, that both compulsory recruitment and voluntary enlistment should be prohibited, and that every party to a conflict should be bound by the optional protocol.
Protection of women

The problems experienced by women in situations of armed conflict have received increased attention over the last several years, and the ICRC took part in several meetings throughout 1998 to discuss the issue and to see how the situation of women could be improved. The ICRC also started to collect, on a systematic basis, information from its field delegations regarding activities conducted in support of women victims of armed conflict. Initial steps were taken to identify and analyse their specific needs, with a view to examining whether the response to those needs was adequate, in both normative and operational terms. The process may result in the development of guidelines aimed at enhancing the role and protection of women during armed conflict, and should also serve to prepare for discussion of the topic at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The right to humanitarian assistance

Aware that the fundamental right to receive assistance has all too frequently been violated, the ICRC continued to remind those bearing arms of the basic rules protecting the civilian population in situations of armed conflict. Its representations focused in particular on the right of victims to receive humanitarian assistance, the duty of States either to provide assistance for the populations under their authority or to allow humanitarian organizations to do so, and the ban on using starvation as a method of warfare.

The ICRC also drew attention to the apolitical and impartial nature of humanitarian aid and insisted that it must not be made subject to political or military considerations. Accordingly, it advocated humanitarian exceptions to economic sanctions imposed on a State by the international community, because these could have disastrous effects for civilians. The ICRC has always considered that its protection work to ensure respect for human life and the physical integrity of the individual is an indispensable dimension of humanitarian assistance.

Recent years have seen a spectacular rise in the number of humanitarian agencies, each with its own priorities and, consequently, its own operational approach. In view of such diversity, the adoption of guidelines and mechanisms for assigning certain tasks to specific humanitarian organizations and ensuring appropriate coordination was necessary. Having examined the issue of complementarity between different humanitarian players at some length, in 1998 the ICRC published its conclusions.2 This study proposes an approach based on the

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2 Modes of action used by humanitarian players, criteria for operational complementarity, P. Bonard, ICRC, 1999.
three universal modes of action: "persuasion", "denunciation" and "substitution". Such an approach should be conducive to increased complementarity and solidarity among humanitarian players, which will be of benefit to victims.

**Human rights**

The year under review was marked by the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The ICRC took an active part in discussions on how fundamental rights and freedoms could be better protected, through both law and action.

In connection with the drafting of new international instruments, the ICRC stressed the need to safeguard the existing hard law provisions of both humanitarian law and human rights law. Indeed, the complementary nature of the two bodies of law and their respective degrees of precision stem to a large extent from their specific features. This ensures more comprehensive legal protection of fundamental rights; confusion between these separate bodies of law could weaken existing safeguards and prove counterproductive.

A constructive dialogue was initiated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Discussion touched upon working methods and principles in certain countries, and possible ways of optimizing the use of advisory services and technical assistance, training, and measures to promote compliance with the law.

**Fundamental standards of humanity**

The UN Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General, in coordination with the ICRC, to continue to study and consult on matters raised in the analytical report submitted to the Commission's 54th session. These matters included the ICRC's study on customary rules of humanitarian law and the newly adopted Statute for an International Criminal Court. As it had done the previous year, the ICRC helped with the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the Commission.

**Terrorism**

In New York the ICRC took part as an observer in the sessions of a working group set up by the UN General Assembly to draft a convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The ICRC insisted on the inclusion of saving clauses for humanitarian law and an article stating that it may visit detainees held in connection with such acts. It also insisted that the future convention should in no way be interpreted as legalizing new means of warfare.
Protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict

The ICRC is actively involved in the review process of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. In 1998 two meetings were organized in preparation for the Diplomatic Conference to be held in The Hague in March 1999, at which a second additional protocol to the Convention may be adopted. In advance of this Conference the ICRC submitted a comprehensive set of proposals designed to bring the 1954 Hague Convention into line with modern humanitarian law, as reflected in the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions and customary international law. The new protocol would also seek to enhance respect for cultural property by establishing individual criminal responsibility for serious violations of the relevant provisions of humanitarian law.

Identification of medical transports

In 1998 the ICRC continued its efforts to improve the identification of medical transports in times of armed conflict. As part of work to develop new technology allowing shipping to be identified from a greater distance, the ITU* and the IMO* drew up a technical recommendation for a new universal system of automatic identification between ships and from ships to coastal stations. The proposed system assigns numerical symbols to different types of shipping. Initially, one such symbol was assigned to maritime medical transports and another to vessels and aircraft belonging to States which are not party to a conflict.

The third meeting of the IMO’s Sub-Committee on Radio Communications and Search and Rescue adopted the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual. At the suggestion of the ICRC, States included a section referring to the provisions of the Second Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I on the protection of maritime search and rescue craft, personnel and installations in times of armed conflict.

REGULATIONS ON WEAPONS

Anti-personnel mines

The signing of the Ottawa treaty by 123 countries in December 1997 was a tremendous step forward in the effort to achieve a worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines. The success of the working partnership among governments.

* ITU: International Telecommunication Union
* IMO: International Maritime Organization
UN agencies, the ICRC, non-governmental organizations and private individuals in bringing a ban treaty to fruition was an unprecedented event in the development of humanitarian law, and work to promote universal adherence to the treaty continued throughout 1998.

On 16 September 1998, Burkina Faso became the 40th State to deposit its instrument of ratification of the Ottawa treaty with the UN Secretary-General in New York. This means that the treaty will enter into force on 1 March 1999, becoming binding international law for almost a third of the 131 States which had signed it by November 1998. The treaty's ratification by 40 States less than a year after it was opened for signature was a unique achievement.

Nevertheless, the ICRC continued its efforts to promote adherence to the Ottawa treaty and ratification and implementation thereof. In addition to producing materials and advertisements for its landmines campaign, the ICRC hosted or backed seminars emphasizing the need for a ban treaty and for assistance to mine victims. Particularly important were an ICRC meeting held in Budapest on 26-28 March for government representatives of Central and Eastern European countries, and one held in Phnom Penh on 2-6 February for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. ICRC representatives also took part in meetings held in Moscow for countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (27 and 28 May, organized by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines), in Vienna for European military officers (7-10 July, hosted by the Austrian and Italian governments), and in Dhaka for active and retired military officers and officials from South Asia (8 and 9 December, organized by the Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, London). In addition, ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga was an opening speaker at the First Middle East Conference on Landmine Injury and Rehabilitation held in Amman on 11 and 12 July. This event was hosted by the Landmine Survivors Network under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan.

By the end of 1998 the number of signatories to the Ottawa treaty had increased to 131 and 58 countries had formally ratified its provisions. The treaty enters into force on 1 March 1999, less than 16 months after being opened for signature – the shortest time ever for the entry into force of a multilateral arms-related treaty. Thus far, 11 States Parties had announced the total destruction of their mine stockpiles and 11 had passed national laws prohibiting anti-personnel landmines.

3 See p. 341.
4 See p. 274.
Confirming the worldwide recognition that anti-personnel mines are weapons which must be eliminated, a growing number of countries which have not signed or ratified the Ottawa treaty are nonetheless taking measures to limit their use. Many such countries have adopted moratoria prohibiting the export of certain types of mines, ended production, begun to destroy their stocks or declared their intention to ratify the treaty once alternatives to mines have been developed.

1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

Seventy-two States are now party to the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), Lithuania being the only country to ratify the Convention during 1998. As for its three original Protocols, 72 States Parties have adhered to Protocol I (on undetectable fragments), 67 to Protocol II (mines, booby-traps and other devices) and 68 to Protocol III (incendiary weapons). The two Protocols subsequently adopted at the 1996 Review Conference, Protocol IV (Blinding laser weapons) and amended Protocol II (mines, booby-traps and other devices) have achieved 31 and 27 ratifications respectively.

The ICRC continued to promote ratification of amended Protocol II, which remains a significant element in the response to the worldwide landmine problem. This instrument is important as it regulates the use of anti-tank and anti-vehicle mines, devices which are not covered by the Ottawa treaty but which nonetheless have a serious impact on civilian populations. It also prohibits the use and transfer of anti-personnel mines which are not detectable and of any mine which will explode upon contact with a mine-detection device. Of the 27 ratifications so far, 15 were filed during 1998. The amended Protocol entered into force on 3 December 1998 and the first meeting of States Parties will be held in September 1999.

Blinding laser weapons

The ICRC was extremely pleased that Protocol IV to the CCW prohibiting the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons came into force on 30 July 1998. During the year 15 countries ratified the Protocol, bringing the total number of ratifications to 31. This was the first time that a weapon had been banned before it had been used on the battlefield. Throughout the year the ICRC encouraged all governments to ratify the Protocol and to take national measures to ensure that such weapons were not developed or produced. These issues are not explicitly addressed in the text of the Protocol but are likely to be dealt with at the next CCW review conference scheduled to take place in 2001. The ICRC also considers it important that when ratifying the Protocol States Parties make a dec-
laration that the instrument applies "in all circumstances". This reflects the understanding among the negotiating countries that such weapons have no place in their arsenals and no legitimate utility in any situation. By the end of 1998 Australia, Austria, Canada, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Liechtenstein, South Africa and Switzerland had made such declarations.

Chemical and biological weapons

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have now been ratified by 121 and 141 countries respectively and significantly extend the prohibition on gas and biological warfare established by the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Yet developments in the fields of microbiology, genetic engineering and biotechnology highlight the need for transparency and for monitoring mechanisms to ensure that developments which could be of benefit to humanity are not used to its detriment. While the CWC established an international body to oversee the destruction of existing chemical weapons and to monitor compliance, there is as yet no parallel entity for the BWC. In statements before the UN General Assembly and other international fora, the ICRC urged the conclusion of negotiations to create a BWC monitoring regime.

Other weapons

The ICRC remained active in monitoring technological advances in existing weaponry and weapons under development in the light of the existing rules of humanitarian law. Of particular concern were bullets which explode on impact with the human body and some types of directed-energy weapons. The effects on health of so-called "non-lethal weapons" was followed closely.

During 1998 the ICRC continued its work to establish objective criteria for the evaluation of weapons on the basis of their effects on health. This initiative, known as the SIRUS Project, seeks to devise criteria which can be used to help determine the legality of certain weapons under humanitarian law. It is based upon the idea that the foreseeable effects of weapon design have an important role to play in identifying weapons which may cause "superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering". The SIRUS criteria were developed in consultation with medical experts familiar with patterns of injury encountered in armed conflict. The project was favourably received in October at the annual meeting of the World Medical Association, which called on all national medical associations to endorse the criteria. By the end of the year eight national medical associations had done so, together with 13 professional medical institutions.
Arms transfers

There is growing recognition among the international community of the consequences in humanitarian terms of unrestrained arms transfers. The availability of small arms and light weapons contributes to the plight of civilian populations during and after armed conflict and threatens to undermine the international legal norms intended to protect them. In many conflicts, civilian casualties outnumber those of combatants; disease, starvation and abuse increase as humanitarian agencies, including the ICRC, become the target of attack and are forced to suspend operations or to withdraw. Furthermore, efforts to build a sustainable peace can be hampered by a "culture of violence" fostered by the easy availability of arms. As is the case for anti-personnel landmine contamination, the widespread presence of weapons hampers attempts to rebuild war-torn societies. During 1998 the ICRC stressed its deep concern about the price civilian populations were paying for the ready availability of arms and ammunition.

The ICRC encouraged all governments to urgently consider the drafting of rules governing the transfer of arms and ammunition, reminding them that although States have a right to retain weapons necessary for their security, they also have an obligation under the Geneva Conventions to ensure respect for humanitarian law. The ICRC believes that the issue of arms transfers must be examined from this angle and that in the development of rules due account must be taken of the criteria laid down by humanitarian law. In 1998 work continued on an ICRC study, commissioned by the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, on the relationship between arms availability and violations of humanitarian law. The results will be presented at the 27th Conference in November 1999.

During the year the ICRC worked with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to present and consolidate its position on this issue. In May, the ICRC and the Norwegian Red Cross co-sponsored an expert meeting on the subject of arms availability and violations of humanitarian law. The 26 experts, coming from 14 countries, proposed a number of national, regional and international measures which could be taken to address the problem. In September, the arms issue and the ICRC's position in that regard was discussed at the annual meeting of National Society legal advisers. The ICRC also outlined its views at a number of international conferences organized by governments, the UN and NGOs.
LEGAL STATUS
AND HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENTS

The special status of the ICRC as "guardian" of humanitarian law has been widely recognized at the international level. Its role and international legal personality were formally acknowledged in 1990, when the UN General Assembly granted the organization observer status. In addition, the ICRC has concluded explicit agreements with more than 60 host governments on its status and that of its staff. These take the form of Headquarters Agreements, although in some cases they have been adopted unilaterally. Such agreements are usually considered as part of international law.

As a rule, the privileges and immunities granted to the ICRC are similar to those accorded to intergovernmental organizations. The reason for requesting such preferential treatment is directly linked to the ICRC's mandate: to discharge its duties it must be able to work in satisfactory conditions of security and independence.

In 1998 Headquarters Agreements were negotiated with several States, and successfully concluded with Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Central African Republic and Turkmenistan.

UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE
OF THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS
AND THEIR ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS

In 1998 a total of 188 States were party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. During the year four States acceded to the two 1977 Protocols additional to the Conventions: Cambodia (14 January), United Kingdom (28 January), Venezuela (23 July) and Grenada (23 September). This brought the number of States party to Additional Protocol I and Additional Protocol II to 152 and 144 respectively.

Article 90 of Additional Protocol I provides for the establishment of an International Fact-Finding Commission to enquire into allegations of serious violations of humanitarian law. In 1998 Paraguay (30 January), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (30 January), Greece (4 February) and Venezuela (23 July) filed declarations recognizing the competence of the Commission, bringing the number of States which had done so to 53.

The UN General Assembly placed a debate on the status of the Additional Protocols on its 1998 agenda, as it had done every two years since the instruments were adopted in 1977, and adopted a resolution (A/RES/53/96) by consensus inviting States which had not yet done so to become party to them. The resol-
ution also affirmed the need to make the implementation of humanitarian law more effective, and requested the Secretary-General to report on the status of the Additional Protocols and on measures taken to strengthen the existing body of humanitarian law.
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 1998. 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.

- States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions: 188
- States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to the 1977 Additional Protocol I: 152
- States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to the 1977 Additional Protocol II: 144
- States party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and to both Additional Protocols: 142
- * States having made the declaration under Article 90 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I: 53
- [] States non party to the Geneva Conventions and Protocols
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 1998. 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 enter into force six months after the date given in the present document; for States making 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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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
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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".

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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.
DISSEMINATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND COMMUNICATION

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. 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.

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.

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.

Four main objectives

In 1998 the ICRC’s programmes for the dissemination of international humanitarian law and communication pursued four main aims:

♦ to place the teaching of humanitarian law to the armed and security forces and in schools and universities on an institutional footing, with a long-term preventive objective;

♦ to promote, in the short term, respect for humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC, so as to enhance respect for civilians, the protection of conflict victims and the security of ICRC personnel in war zones; and to carry out
preventive programmes drawing attention to the danger of landmines in countries affected by this scourge;

♦ to provide greater support for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in their activities to disseminate humanitarian law and to promote the Fundamental Principles and the action of the Movement;
♦ to disseminate information and to organize media campaigns and thus mobilize civil society, with a view to gaining support for current humanitarian causes, whether in connection with "forgotten" conflicts or with the international campaign against anti-personnel mines.

These programmes, budgeted at 69 million Swiss francs overall, were carried out from the ICRC's 56 field delegations and its Geneva headquarters and involved 350 specialist staff.\(^1\)

At headquarters, the year ended with a thoroughgoing reorganization of the units responsible for the promotion of international humanitarian law and communication.

**PLACING THE TEACHING OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW ON AN INSTITUTIONAL BASIS**

During the year programmes of preventive action designed for established structures, such as the armed and security forces, universities and schools, were consolidated.

**Humanitarian law and military instruction**

The ICRC pursued its endeavour to foster cooperation with the armed forces in the area of military instruction and to have humanitarian law incorporated in operational planning. These efforts yielded results, with the training of instructors for this purpose in the armed forces and the production of teaching materials suited to different types of combatants. Nine headquarters staff and 14 delegates in the field worked on these programmes during the year.

One of the ICRC's main priorities in this domain was maintaining its contacts with internationally reputed or regionally important military academies, such as the Inter-American Defense College, the NATO Defence College in Rome, the Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr in Hamburg and the Collège Interarmées de Défense in Paris.

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\(^1\) Numerous examples of these activities are given in the boxes in the chapter Operational activities (pp. 12-305).
As in previous years, the ICRC sought to capitalize on the synergy between different countries in the same region and continued its efforts to place the teaching of the law of armed conflict on a regional basis, especially in Africa and Central Europe. Along the same lines, the ICRC took part in NATO exercises involving several countries in order to strengthen the humanitarian law component in this type of training.

From its close monitoring of conflicts around the world, the ICRC has observed that the police and security forces are increasingly becoming involved in situations of internal strife and conflict, where operations to maintain order can quickly escalate into military action. This has prompted the ICRC to focus more specifically on the police and security forces and to develop a type of instruction that takes into account both the rules of humanitarian law and the human rights rules which apply to various situations entailing recourse to force. To this end, a manual was published in 1998 under the title *To Serve and to Protect: Human Rights and Humanitarian Law for Police and Security Forces.*

For the first time, the ICRC sent into the field a delegate with professional experience as a police officer. This was in connection with a pilot project under which instructors were trained to teach the fundamentals of human rights and humanitarian law to all the police forces in the federated states of Brazil. The approach adopted combined theory and practice. In view of the positive results achieved, the ICRC will be sending out more specialists in 1999 to establish relations with police forces on other continents.

Two other projects were launched in Geneva in 1998. In cooperation with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the ICRC developed INTACT (Interactive Crisis Management Training), a course intended for middle management personnel in the military, diplomatic and humanitarian spheres who have to cooperate in the field, mainly in peace-keeping or peace-making operations.

The ICRC also began drafting a standard manual of the law of armed conflict, which is to be presented to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent at the end of 1999.

**Humanitarian law and the academic world**

Speaking to an audience of some 240 university rectors in Berlin at the 11th General Assembly of the Association of European Universities, the President of the ICRC outlined the organization’s objectives with regard to the dissemination of humanitarian law in the academic world, namely to raise awareness of the

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2 See pp. 148-149.
importance of this body of law among the future economic, political, media and military elite and to train experts who will have the task of contributing to development of the law. Whereas in the past the ICRC generally addressed its message to law faculties, it is now targeting additional disciplines, including international relations and journalism.

In 1998 the ICRC increased the number of its programmes, deploying around 15 delegates specializing in this type of instruction in Geneva and in the field. The main objectives are as follows.

♦ To promote the systematic teaching of humanitarian law in the universities of certain countries, such as the republics of the former Soviet Union and Colombia.

♦ To organize ad hoc courses designed for advanced students of law. To this end, the ICRC provided support for the traditional summer courses for students from Europe and North America. The English-language course, organized jointly with the Polish Red Cross in Warsaw, was attended by 29 students from 19 countries. The French-language course, organized by the French Red Cross, was held in Lyon and was attended by 35 participants from 15 countries.

♦ To provide training in humanitarian law for university lecturers specializing in public international law or human rights law. With the support of the Hauser Foundation, the ICRC brought together a group of around 30 academics from all over the world for an initial course held in Geneva in August 1998. Similar courses, organized at national or regional level, were also held in the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and Kenya.

♦ To stimulate the interest of students in the study of humanitarian law and research on the subject. To this end, the ICRC organized the second De Martens moot court competition in St Petersburg and was associated with the organization of the 10th Jean Pictet international humanitarian law competition in Malta. These two events attracted 13 and 23 teams respectively, representing universities in the CIS, Europe and the Americas.

♦ To raise awareness of humanitarian law among representatives of non-governmental organizations and the specialized United Nations agencies, and to train them in the subject. The main event of the year was the first seminar organized jointly by the Harvard Human Rights Program of Harvard Law School and the ICRC, which was attended by around 25 high-level participants. In addition, the ICRC cooperated with the Paris-based International Law 90 research centre to set up a Website forum on humanitarian law.

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3 An American foundation which encourages the teaching of international humanitarian law in particular.

* CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States
♦ To produce and distribute teaching materials specially designed for universities. The composition of the standard series of humanitarian law documents distributed by the ICRC was completely revised, model courses were drawn up for delegations and interested universities, and work continued on the publication of a collection of practical cases relating to humanitarian law. Finally, the *International Review of the Red Cross* continued to play an important role in dissemination of the law in academic circles.

♦ To strengthen the existing links between the ICRC and Swiss universities through an in-depth exchange of views with university rectors and further work on the project to establish a teaching and research centre for international humanitarian law in Geneva.

**Programmes for young people**

The general purpose of ICRC programmes for young people is to provide them with basic standards of reference that enable them to form an opinion on humanitarian and social problems, taking into account the principle of human dignity. They should be able to apply this principle not only in their everyday lives now but also later when they have become responsible adults.

For a number of years, the ICRC has been developing educational activities based on its practical observation of human behaviour in the face of different forms of violence. The programmes set up locally by ICRC delegations, often in cooperation with National Societies, continued in 1998, notably in the former Yugoslavia, Jordan and Guinea.

In the republics which emerged from the former Soviet Union, the programmes conducted in secondary schools since 1994 were diversified in 1998.

♦ In Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, a second literature textbook with a humanitarian content was tried out on a sample of pupils in the 12-13 age group.

♦ In Georgia, pupils' awareness of humanitarian law was raised not only through literature but also through geography, history and foreign language lessons.

♦ In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan textbooks on civics were published, dealing largely with problems connected with respect for humanitarian law in situations of violence. In addition, various extra-curricular activities were organized to enable schoolchildren to put into practice what they learned in class (for example, work with a branch of the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan).
In response to the growing demand for educational material for the young, the ICRC, in partnership with outside experts, launched a project to produce multi-media teaching modules and to circulate them on the international level. Based on situations of conflict, these modules prepare adolescents to incorporate what they have learned about humanitarian law in their own behaviour and in their analysis of current events. The initial versions will be finished by the end of the year 2000, when they will be distributed to formal and informal educational networks through the National Societies and the ICRC.

UNICEF and the ICRC jointly produced a module entitled *The violence of exploitation, the exploitation of violence*. Focusing on the violence and exploitation to which children fall victim, this teaching module follows a sequence whose starting point is the plight of child soldiers and child workers. On this basis adolescents are invited to discuss various issues, such as the importance of the law and the mechanisms which give rise to violence and exploitation, drawing a parallel with the situation in industrialized countries. The module is to be tried out in interested French-speaking countries through the Red Cross/Red Crescent network and the national committees of UNICEF. If the test proves successful, the module will be distributed more widely and in other languages.

**DISSEMINATION OF HUMANITARIAN LAW AND COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICTS**

In the midst of the conflicts and the tense and complex situations which marked 1998, the dissemination officers based in operational delegations continued their public relations and dissemination activities so as to facilitate the ICRC’s work, improve the security of its staff, enhance respect for civilians and conflict victims, and provide the public – whether beneficiaries of aid, the local authorities or the media – with information.

In 1998 there was ample confirmation of the growing use of modern means of communication in war. Parties to conflict sent messages to the ICRC by e-mail, while groups of combatants set up Websites to put out information and propaganda and operated FM radio stations.

Furthermore, the ICRC is working increasingly in contexts where other humanitarian organizations, whether governmental or otherwise, are present. As a result it is having to develop procedures for cooperating with these organizations, while at the same time reaffirming the principles which govern the conduct of its operations, in order to maintain consistency and to ensure that its activities are respected by the combatants.
RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

Wherever possible the ICRC endeavours to involve the National Societies in its programmes for the dissemination of humanitarian law in their countries. More specifically, it does what it can to support the National Societies' own dissemination and internal training programmes. Here are a few examples of such activities in 1998:

♦ In Bangkok, the regional delegation concluded an agreement with the Red Cross Society of China to carry out a three-year programme entitled "Dissemination China 2001". A regional working group, on which the National Society and the Hong Kong and Macao Red Cross branches were represented, drew up a dissemination handbook for use by local branches of the Chinese Red Cross. A preliminary version of the handbook was examined at an initial seminar held in Central China and attended by representatives from all over the country.

♦ In Kenya, the National Society and the ICRC joined forces to play their humanitarian role in the context of the political and tribal strife ravaging the country. Traditional dissemination activities aimed at the armed forces were supplemented by a media campaign intended to stimulate debate in civil society on the humanitarian rules to be respected in violent confrontations. A seminar held in June recommended the introduction of humanitarian law into the university curriculum and the establishment of Red Cross clubs to encourage discussion of this body of law.

♦ During the first half of 1998, a delegate from the Japanese Red Cross Society worked as a trainee at the Division for the Promotion of International Humanitarian Law in Geneva. The British and Irish National Societies met for two days with the ICRC to work on a joint dissemination project for Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

♦ In the Russian Federation, the ICRC helped the Russian Red Cross to modernize its magazine and turn it into an instrument for maintaining contact between the hundreds of branches throughout the country and for providing them with information and training.
COMMUNICATION

Relations with the media

Media interest in humanitarian operations was undiminished in 1998. Accordingly, the ICRC increased the size of its public relations team, deploying around 30 information officers in the main delegations in addition to the press officers at headquarters.

These moves were made to meet a growing need – on the part of both the ICRC and the media – for dialogue and information on humanitarian matters. They were also intended to reconcile the public's demand for information with the necessity to respect the dignity of the victims, while maintaining, where appropriate, the confidentiality of exchanges between the ICRC and its operational contacts. Various means were developed to illustrate situations giving rise to humanitarian concern and the assistance and protection measures the ICRC takes in such circumstances. In this connection, the ICRC's audiovisual productions are increasingly taken up by the major distribution agencies which supply the bulk of international news stories to national television stations.

At the same time, the ICRC did its utmost to provide the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which themselves often take part in ICRC operations in the field, with a maximum of information.

Fiftieth anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions

In advance of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the ICRC embarked upon a large-scale survey of populations affected by war. The first stages of this consultation exercise took place in Colombia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. A similar project is planned for countries at peace.

Through this project, entitled "People on War", the ICRC and the Movement as a whole are conducting a campaign to raise public awareness and to stimulate discussion on the theme "Even wars have limits". Launched on 10 November 1998 at the Imperial War Museum in London, the campaign will continue up to the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, due to take place in Geneva in November 1999.
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Information for the general public

User activity on the ICRC's Website increased further during 1998, maintaining the upward trend observed since the site opened in 1995. Information continued to be updated daily to keep cybernauts abreast of developments and issues related to conflict victims and humanitarian action in war zones. A Spanish version of the site was opened in July to complement the existing English and French versions and broaden the presence of the ICRC on the Web.

Three new sections appeared on the site during the year. A section on the history of the ICRC was introduced during the first quarter and will be completed in 1999. A feature on the campaign to promote the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions was added in November, coinciding with the campaign launch. Finally, an interactive fundraising section called "Help the ICRC" was opened in early December to offer the public the opportunity to donate funds directly by credit card.

Regular publications such as the International Review of the Red Cross, the Annual Report and Red Cross, Red Crescent magazine (published jointly with the Federation) continued to appear in 1998. In addition, a new edition of Panorama entitled "Fires still burning" was produced to heighten awareness of the proliferation of conflicts throughout the world and to counter the popular notion that war is no longer as widespread as previously.

The end of the year saw the launch of a new publication entitled Forum, a yearly series designed to encourage debate on a specific subject. The first issue addressed "War and water", a topic chosen for its supreme importance in humanitarian terms, and featured articles commissioned from journalists and experts in this field from both within and outside the ICRC.

Published in 1998 under the auspices of the ICRC, Hard Choices: Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention is a collection of contributions from 16 internationally renowned authors on humanitarian action and the moral dilemmas to which it can give rise. The work seeks to stimulate thought on this complex subject and to foster a sense of responsibility among the chief players on the humanitarian scene.

The ICRC continued to distribute, via agency networks, rough-cut video material on its operational activities for TV channels to edit and broadcast.

In 1998, these included stories on Liberia (Respect the Rules) and Sri Lanka (Mercy Boat), co-produced for distribution via the Associated Press Television News and European Broadcasting Union news networks and for CNN World Report and APTN Roving Report. Special edits were also produced from this material for National Societies.
In addition, the following projects were carried out:

♦ a five-minute clip entitled Shattered Lives, illustrating the indiscriminate use of landmines; the clip is made up of a series of photos accompanied by music and lyrics by the Australian songwriter Bernard Carney;

♦ a briefing video for medical and legal experts, explaining the SIRUS\(^5\) medical project, which seeks to establish objective criteria for assessing the effects of weapons;

♦ several training videos on prosthetic/orthotic techniques, the fitting of artificial limbs, safe driving for ICRC staff in conflict zones, etc.;

♦ video material to support the preparatory stages and the launch of the "People on War" campaign marking the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions;

♦ co-productions on community fishing, water treatment and distribution in Somalia and livestock immunization in northern Mali with the UNDP* Azimuths programme, which is seen on about 60 TV channels around the world;

♦ a partnership was started with the Television Trust for the Environment and the Hands On programme it produces for BBC World, with a series of short documentaries illustrating rehabilitation projects and focusing on the development of technical skills in areas such as fishing;

♦ a series of three 50-minute documentaries examining ICRC action past and present, which is the result of two years of collaboration with Fulcrum Productions Ltd. The series, entitled Crossing the Lines, was first broadcast on BBC 2 in the spring of 1998.

Historical research

Ever since its inception, the ICRC has analysed its past operations in order to learn lessons for the future. Following the Second World War this led to a process of systematic and in-depth historical research. The resulting studies are published, notably in the form of articles in the International Review of the Red Cross.

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\(^5\) See p. 32 and p. 322.

* UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
At the beginning of 1998 texts on the history of the ICRC from its founding to the outbreak of the First World War (1863-1914) and on its action during the Second World War were produced for the historical section of its Website.

As in previous years, the Working Group on the Second World War, which brings together staff from the main departments concerned (operations, international law and communication, archives), met to deal with various cases concerning the action of the ICRC during the war.

Contacts were also maintained with former ICRC delegates.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In 1998 the Communication Division was given fresh impetus and a new outlook in terms of its mission, orientations, responsibilities and organization, with a view to ensuring that the ICRC's communication policy and action could rise to the new challenges in the humanitarian environment. The aim of the new Communication Division is to provide the ICRC with the leadership, expertise and means, for both external and internal communication, needed to influence the attitude and behaviour of those who determine the fate of war victims and who can hamper or facilitate ICRC action, to create a strong corporate identity and to project a clear corporate image.

In 1999, the Communication Division will be reorganized around seven centres of expertise (Operational Support, Education and Behaviour, Production, Public Information, Relations with the Armed and Security Forces, Campaigns and Marketing, Research and Development), and will forge closer links with the operational zones.
ICRC COOPERATION WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

Cooperation within the Movement in 1998 centred on the follow-up to the major decisions taken by the Council of Delegates meeting in Seville in November 1997, especially in the following two areas:

♦ implementation of the Seville Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;

♦ preparations for the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, due to take place in Geneva from 31 October to 6 November 1999. The Standing Commission held several meetings in 1998 (see below). The group of ambassadors set up to advise the Conference organizers met on three occasions at the ICRC and at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. These meetings proved constructive and enabled the organizers to take the observations and suggestions made by the representatives of 30 permanent missions in Geneva into account in preparing the plan of action and the agenda for the Conference.

Cooperation between the various components of the Movement was given fresh impetus by the Council of Delegates in Seville, with provision for more exchanges and consultation, notably in the operational sphere. It was in the "spirit of Seville" that the ICRC received at its headquarters the National Societies members of the Executive Council of the Federation, together with the Federation's Vice-Presidents, on 24 and 25 April for open discussions on two matters of common interest. The first was naturally the implementation of the Seville Agreement by all components of the Movement, and the second concerned various aspects of humanitarian mobilization campaigns, with particular reference to the lessons learned from the Movement's campaign for a ban on anti-personnel landmines. Both topics were the subject of joint reports by the ICRC and the Federation, which the Standing Commission sent at year's end to all National Societies.
THE WORK OF THE STATUTORY BODIES

Standing Commission

The Standing Commission is the body within the Movement whose primary function is to oversee preparations for the forthcoming International Conference and Council of Delegates.

The Commission comprises nine members: five representatives of National Societies, who are elected by each International Conference to serve in their personal capacity, two representatives of the ICRC, and two of the Federation. It met twice in 1998: on 20 and 21 April, and on 19 and 20 October.

One sad event during 1998 was the loss of Dr Guillermo Rueda Montaña of the Colombian Red Cross, a particularly highly esteemed member of the Commission. Because of his commitment and dedication to upholding the principles and ideals of the Movement, Dr Rueda Montaña's views and personal qualities inspired universal respect.

During the period under review, the Commission met both in plenary session and in ad hoc working groups to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the Council of Delegates. The three ad hoc groups, each of which was chaired by an elected member of the Commission, discussed (a) preparations for the 27th International Conference, (b) preparations for and follow-up to the Council of Delegates, and (c) questions relating to the emblem. ICRC staff played an active part in these discussions.

In connection with preparations for the 27th Conference and the Council of Delegates, consultation meetings between the groups were held in October with an enlarged membership, including leading figures in the Movement.

Work of the ad hoc groups

This group met on several occasions between April and October 1998. The main focus of its discussions was the content of the plan of action and the structure of the Conference. The plan of action will be a simple, practical document defining the measures and activities to be undertaken in priority areas. A new structure was proposed for the Conference whereby a single commission will deal with a different section of the plan of action on each of three consecutive days.

The primary task of this working group was to determine which themes and concerns of the Movement should be included on the agenda of the next Council of Delegates in 1999. It also made preparations for the discussions at the 1999 session and for its organization, so as to enable the Council to fulfil its role as the supreme deliberative body for matters internal to the Movement.
At its meeting in Seville in November 1997 the Council of Delegates adopted a resolution (Resolution 2) recommending that the Standing Commission continue its consultations with National Societies and government experts in an effort to resolve specific problems relating to the emblem. The resolution emphasized the longstanding value of the existing emblems, but recognized the need to find a comprehensive solution for situations where the current emblems were not respected, or where there was a danger that they might not be respected. The Standing Commission mandated two of its members to pursue informal consultations with National Societies, government experts and representatives of States with a view to reaching broad consensus among National Societies and establishing a basis for dialogue aimed at finding a widely acceptable solution.

FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ICRC AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Consultation and coordination mechanisms in Geneva

Following adoption of the Seville Agreement, the mandates of the three main mechanisms for consultation and coordination between the Federation and the ICRC were reviewed and modified so as to bring them into line with the division of labour stipulated by the Agreement. These mechanisms are as follows:

Senior management meetings, usually held every six or seven weeks, which bring together the Secretary General and Under Secretaries General of the Federation and the ICRC Directors. The purpose of these meetings is to:

♦ identify and manage new opportunities for cooperation within the Movement, in accordance with the general aims of the Seville Agreement;
♦ exchange information during the initial stage of major operational and organizational activities so as to take advantage of opportunities for complementary action and resolve any difficulties without delay;
♦ improve understanding of the key concerns and priorities of each organization, thereby fostering mutual respect.

The Joint ICRC/Federation Commission, which oversees cooperation between the two organizations in general, not including operational activities. It usually meets three times a year. Discussions are held and agreement is reached in the following main areas:
♦ preparations for the Movement's statutory meetings;
communication, upholding and disseminating the Fundamental Principles, promoting international humanitarian law and protecting the integrity of National Societies.

The Joint ICRC/Federation Commission for National Society Statutes, whose mandate – laid down by Resolution VI of the 22nd International Conference of the Red Cross (Teheran, 1973) and Resolution XX of the 24th International Conference (Manila, 1981) – remains unchanged. The Commission submits recommendations on the recognition and admission of new National Societies and on amendments to the statutes of recognized Societies to the relevant bodies of the ICRC and the Federation.

Cooperation between the ICRC and the Federation is not limited to the above mechanisms. Units such as operations, communication, training and logistics maintain regular and direct contacts with their counterparts in the other organization. Recent months have seen an increase in discussions and activities undertaken jointly in the field.

Implementation of the Seville Agreement

The Agreement on the Organization of the International Activities of the Components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which the Council of Delegates adopted by consensus on 26 November 1997 in Seville, emphasizes the spirit which should prevail over cooperation between the components of the Movement and at the same time clearly defines the components' respective roles. This approach is now the guiding principle behind the Movement's theory and practice in the field of cooperation.

The Agreement states that "each component - the Federation, the ICRC, and National Societies – is individually responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this Agreement, and shall instruct its volunteers and staff accordingly".

The Secretariat of the Federation and the ICRC organized several joint training courses for their Geneva-based and field staff. In addition, a common training module was put together, comprising a reference document and a case study. The task of developing a standard and user-friendly training module was a challenge in itself and led to a constructive sharing of ideas.

Certain National Societies took part in this training project. These were the Societies that attended the first meeting on functional cooperation, held on 2 and 3 July, and the participating National Societies present at the consultation meeting organized by the Federation and the ICRC on 28 September.

In accordance with Resolution 7 of the Council of Delegates, the senior management of the ICRC and of the Federation set up a joint six-member working group with the task of following up the recommendation that new initiatives be developed to promote functional cooperation. In order to maximize the group's
effectiveness, it was asked to examine three different cases: an international relief operation (Afghanistan), a regional delegation (Harare in southern Africa) and a general activity (follow-up to the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines).

The working group organized a number of internal consultations as well as a meeting on 2 and 3 July with five National Societies which were actively involved in these three different types of situation. These were the British Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross and the Canadian, Mozambique and Zimbabwe Red Cross Societies. The Afghan Red Crescent Society will take part in future meetings.

**ICRC CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL SOCIETIES**

It is essential that all members of the Movement be capable of providing assistance in an effective and efficient manner. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a functional National Society in every country with the capacity to respond rapidly to armed conflicts and other disasters, the ICRC helps strengthen and support the National Societies through cooperation in various fields of activity.

In 1998 the ICRC focused its cooperation on areas in which it had specific expertise to put at the disposal of other components of the Movement. The main emphasis was placed on development of the National Societies' capacity in spheres related to the ICRC's specific mandate, i.e., dissemination, conflict preparedness and tracing.

In accordance with the provisions of the 1997 Seville Agreement, the ICRC consistently endeavoured to involve the National Societies in its response to the needs of victims of conflict and internal strife, and sought their participation in operations carried out by the ICRC in accordance with its mandate. When mounting joint operations, the ICRC tried to include elements of capacity-building, mainly in the fields of operational management and the development of human resources.

During the conflict in Guinea-Bissau, for instance, ICRC delegates helped the National Society to evacuate the wounded and distribute food to residents who had chosen to remain in Bissau. A tracing network was set up in cooperation with regional branches to restore family links. During the third quarter of the year alone, some 600 messages for addressees abroad were collected by Red Cross volunteers.

In Sri Lanka, the ICRC and the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society continued to work together in key development and operational areas within the mandates of both the National Society and the ICRC. This cooperation included ICRC
requests from National Societies

support for the National Society in carrying out an assessment of tracing and family services and of dissemination needs and target groups in each of its branches.

In Colombia, a series of 11 cooperation projects receiving ICRC support were successfully implemented. These included training for National Society staff and volunteers, dissemination for the armed forces, courses on security during field operations, communication, fundraising and strengthening of the National Society's administrative structure.

The ICRC also responded, in consultation with other components of the Movement, to requests from National Societies for support in other priority areas. In the Dominican Republic, for instance, the ICRC and the Federation assisted the National Society in preparing new statutes and comprehensive internal regulations, including electoral rules and procedures governing volunteer activities, aimed at ensuring the National Society's independence.

In terms of internal management and follow-up of cooperation activities in the field, a new project management system was introduced in ICRC field delegations, allowing both headquarters and field personnel to monitor more closely the implementation of activities planned in cooperation with National Societies.

MEETINGS WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The ICRC, which attaches a great deal of importance to National Society meetings, was represented by its President and other members at a number of key events, including those listed below.

♦ seventh meeting of the National Societies of the Visegrad Group, Budapest, Hungary, 28 and 29 May;
♦ meeting of Presidents and Secretaries General of the National Societies of the Nordic countries, Reykjavik, Iceland, 27 and 28 August;
♦ 28th Regional Conference of Arab Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies, Amman, Jordan, 22-24 September;
♦ fifth Asia and Pacific Regional Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Hanoi, Viet Nam, 16-19 November.
Central Asian Cooperation Meeting organized by the Federation and the Norwegian Red Cross, Oslo, Norway, 11-13 February;

eighth meeting of the Presidents of the South American National Societies (sub-region II), Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, 25-29 May;

Coordination Meeting of the Central African National Societies, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 25-27 May;

eighth Programme Meeting of Pacific Red Cross Societies, Fiji, 1-5 June;

regional meeting of 15 National Societies, organized by the Federation in Nairobi, Kenya, 6-12 June;

European Seminar on Volunteerism, organized by the Federation in Modane, France, 30 August - 5 September;

third workshop of the "Groupe de Praia", Nouakchott, Mauritania, 11-18 October.

The ICRC took part in events marking important anniversaries of several National Societies. The ICRC President went to Slovenia in August for the 50th anniversary of the recognition of the Slovenian Red Cross, to Jordan in September for the 50th anniversary of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society, and to Bulgaria in October for the 120th anniversary of the Bulgarian Red Cross. The ICRC was also represented at the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society.

At the request of National Societies or having itself issued invitations, in 1998 the ICRC organized 60 visits for 170 leaders, senior officials, staff and members of National Societies. These visits, whose purpose is to enhance knowledge of the ICRC, the way it functions and its activities, also offer an opportunity for discussions on matters of common interest and tend to strengthen the unity of the Movement.
FUNDS AND MEDALS

Florence Nightingale Medal

A circular was sent on 1 September to the Central Committees of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies inviting them to nominate one or more candidates for the 37th award of the Medal, due to take place on 12 May 1999.

The capital of the Empress Shôken Fund, established in 1912 thanks to a donation from the Empress of Japan to encourage relief work in times of peace, has been increased on several occasions by new gifts from the Japanese Imperial Family, the Japanese government, the Japanese Red Cross Society and the Meiji Jingu Shrine Sukei-Kai association. The income from the Fund is used to finance, in full or in part, specific National Society projects in the areas of development, equipment and transport.

In 1998 the Joint Commission for the Empress Shôken Fund, which is responsible for distributing its income, considered requests submitted by 41 National Societies and awarded grants totalling 300,000 Swiss francs to the National Societies of the following countries: Chile, El Salvador, Gambia, Honduras, Liberia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

The purpose of the Maurice de Madre French Fund is to assist National Society, Federation and ICRC staff who suffer injury or illness in the service of the Movement or, in the event of their death, to provide aid to their families. The Fund paid out some 215,000 Swiss francs during the year.

Empress Shôken Fund

Maurice de Madre French Fund

HENRY DUNANT INSTITUTE

In 1998 the Henry Dunant Institute underwent its most extensive transformation since it was founded in 1965.

In the past few years there have been major changes in the scope, structure and dynamics of the humanitarian world, which is still evolving rapidly with the constant increase in the number of organizations and players on the humanitarian scene. The nature of needs and the demand for humanitarian action have radically altered since the disappearance of the bipolar division of the world which prevailed until 1989.

For this reason, and in the view of the process of globalization which has marked the end of this century, the General Assembly of the Henry Dunant Institute decided to adapt to the new order. Having dissolved the association which linked the ICRC, the Federation and the Swiss Red Cross, it set up a new institution in the form of a foundation with the name "Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue".
The foundation, which comprises 25 to 40 members, now caters for a broader public interested in humanitarian affairs. It is open not only to international or non-governmental organizations and governments but also to the private sector, experts, and any organization or association representing conflict or disaster victims. Its aim is to establish a multidisciplinary and multilateral dialogue on specific and general issues of humanitarian concern.
The year under review was another very busy one for the International Tracing Service (ITS) in Arolsen, which is supervised and administered by the ICRC.

The primary task of the ITS is to provide civilian victims of the National Socialist regime - or their descendants or other eligible parties - with certificates attesting to their persecution. In 1998 the ITS received almost 269,000 requests from more than 60 countries, an increase of over 20,000 as compared with 1997, and sent out more than 274,000 replies. Recognizing the need to deliver certificates as quickly as possible to those who suffered persecution, most of whom are now very elderly, the ITS continued to digitize its documents, starting with the central card index. It also pursued its efforts to contact organizations in the countries where most of the requests originate so as to secure their cooperation and thus speed up the processing of cases.

To be in a position to issue as many positive replies as it can, the ITS must ensure that its archives are as comprehensive as possible and has continued the search for new documents. In 1998 it added 360 linear metres to its collection, bringing the total to more than 23,000 metres. As a result it had to extend its premises, taking due precautions for the security of the documents stored.

The 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War prompted renewed interest in exploring all the little-known aspects of that conflict. The ITS therefore examined how it could best serve persons wishing to conduct historical research without infringing the rules protecting personal data or slowing down the processing of requests from former victims of persecution. The International Commission for the ITS, the Service's supervisory body, has now agreed to the principle of opening ITS files to researchers, and the two major memorial centres, for the Holocaust, the Yad Vashem World Center for Teaching the Holocaust in Jerusalem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, have been contacted so as to coordinate action in this area. Computerization should soon make it possible to meet the needs of researchers without risk to the original documents.

Since most requests come from Belarus, Poland, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, it would seem logical for these countries to be represented in the International Commission for the ITS. The Commission, which currently comprises 10 members, has agreed to this in principle and has invited the four countries to take part in its annual meeting as observers. Poland has already applied for membership in the Commission and the admission procedure is under way.
Where do they go from now? Providing victims of war with immediate relief is only the first step: the ICRC aims to reestablish self-sufficiency as soon as possible and plans its operations accordingly. One of the major challenges is helping amputees find ways of making a living. During the year under review, more than 19,000 people were fitted with artificial limbs and other appliances.
Planning for the future and implementing the changes

A programme to implement the five-year strategic plan resulting from the Avenir project was launched in the second quarter of 1998. This involved several changes in the structure of the ICRC.

A new Directorate, chaired by a Director-General, assumed responsibility for the running of the organization, and a Planning and Evaluation Unit was set up. The six operational zones were regrouped into three, and the Health and Relief Divisions were merged so as to streamline the management of operations in the field.

A new planning system was developed with a view to defining more clearly the results sought in the short, medium and long term and the strategic choices determining ICRC action. Operations planned in this way will be easier to evaluate. The system is to be introduced in stages up to the year 2001.

With regard to finance, the ICRC succeeded in reducing its deficit of 25 million Swiss francs to 2 million during the year. This positive trend resulted from an additional effort made by the organization's traditional donors, which kept up their generous support, and measures of economy taken at headquarters. Another factor was an unusually low rate of implementation of operational objectives because of growing difficulties of access in various theatres of operation.

Dialogue with the main donors was stepped up in order to share with them the ICRC's concerns for the future. As in 1997, an effort was made to improve the quality of the financial information supplied to donors.

In the area of human resources, the difficulties encountered in previous years in recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of competent and versatile staff persisted.

The ICRC pursued its policy of recruiting non-Swiss personnel, especially from National Societies, which supplied a total of 521 employees from 23 different countries in 1998. Unfortunately, owing to the problems of access faced in some countries, these staff members were not always able to do their work as they would have wished.

Reforms were introduced in the management of human resources in order to improve the integration of the various categories of ICRC staff, especially those recruited by the delegations. The drawing up of a reference list of skills and qualifications applicable to all posts and all staff was expected to lead to better planning of human resources in the coming years.

A new financial programme comprising a financial accounting system compatible with international accounting standards and an activity-based costing system was completed and was due to come into effect on 1 January 1999.
Similarly, progress was made during the year on a new management system incorporating data relating to logistics, human resources and finance. The system is to be implemented gradually in 1999.

Jacques Stroun
Director of Human Resources and Finance
HUMAN RESOURCES

It is becoming increasingly important for the ICRC to be able to deploy qualified staff at very short notice. Achieving this aim, which is a major challenge in crisis situations, requires a concerted effort on the part of all the functions of human resource management: recruitment, training, planning, development and professional mobility. New tools have been devised to ensure that these various functions dovetail as closely as possible.

A standard list of the skills required to perform the various tasks relating to humanitarian action has been drawn up and will serve as a basis for staff development. At the outset, it will allow more precise identification of the skills sought among new candidates offering their services to the ICRC. Moreover, having a clear definition of the capabilities of each staff member will make it easier for him or her to embark on a new career when the time comes to leave the ICRC.

The Human Resources Division has acquired a new data management system which enables it to follow the extremely complicated movements of staff in the field, giving an overview of the staffing situation in general and ensuring precise and up-to-date management of every individual staff member.

Training

Efforts to train staff in the field, which had been initiated in 1997, continued in 1998. Seven introductory training courses were held at headquarters and eight in the field, three of them conducted by the Nairobi regional training unit, two by the Colombo unit and two by the Sarajevo unit. A similar course, organized by headquarters, was held in Tbilisi.

In addition, the ICRC provided the resource persons for 20 basic training courses organized jointly with the Federation Secretariat and participating National Societies. Cooperation with the Movement and in particular with the Federation was extended with a joint introductory training course for personnel attached to headquarters. Moreover, contacts with people in charge of training, especially in UN agencies, NGOs and universities, were further developed.

Similarly, the career advisory service and the training unit held joint meetings with a number of representatives of the outside business world in order to present the wide experience that ICRC staff acquire during their employment, in terms of both personal development and practical skills.

Finally, a project to set up an ICRC training centre close to its Geneva headquarters is taking shape and the centre should be functioning before the end of the year 2000.

IN 1998, ON AVERAGE, THE ICRC HAD:

♦ 1,106 expatriate staff, including 201 seconded by National Societies;
♦ 6,481 local employees under ICRC contract;
♦ 620 staff working at headquarters, including 8 seconded by National Societies.
Management of national staff

The ICRC is working to upgrade the status of delegation employees, and to this end has included the management of national staff in its overall human resources policy. The unit in charge of locally recruited employees has been strengthened and is now an integral part of the Human Resources Division.

Upgrading the status of delegation employees means that, depending on their skills and their interests, they may fulfil certain functions that hitherto were entrusted to ICRC and National Society expatriates, and that they may do so both in their own countries and in other delegations. National employees represent a vast potential: with their high degree of motivation and the knowledge of local conditions and sensitivities that an expatriate acquires only after several years of experience, they make a vital contribution to the performance of ICRC delegations.

Two important management principles are being applied in the process of upgrading national staff and entrusting them with greater responsibilities:
♦ each delegation will define the policy it can adopt in this regard, on the basis of the potential of its employees, while taking the political, social and cultural context into account:
♦ delegation employees who perform functions involving responsibilities that would formerly have been assumed by an expatriate are now included in the Human Resources Division's general staff listings and are subject to the rights and obligations pertaining to their functions (right to information, participation in meetings, reporting, etc.).

Occupational health evaluations

Two evaluations were conducted concerning occupational health problems among ICRC field personnel. The first focused on the ICRC's stress management programme¹ and the second on malaria prophylaxis and treatment among ICRC expatriates returning from Africa.

The year in figures

In 1998 the ICRC hired 192 new staff members, including 180 for the field (60 delegates, 14 administrators, 11 secretaries, 20 interpreters, 36 medical and paramedical specialists, etc). In addition, the National Societies of 21 countries continued to provide considerable support for the ICRC by seconding no fewer than 476 people for assignments of various duration, representing an average of 201 posts over the year.

² See p. 366.
Progression of staff requirements
1989 - 1998

* including 12, 13 and 8 posts at headquarters in 1996, 1997 and 1998, respectively.
In the first half of the 1990s, the ICRC's annual field budgets decreased and changes were made in the allocation of the organization's funds. Needs in terms of food aid declined and the emphasis gradually shifted from the provision of relief to core activities more specific to the ICRC, such as protecting detainees and civilians, restoring family links and promoting international humanitarian law. Although these activities also received support from the donor community, they proved more difficult to finance than food-aid programmes.

This may be one of the reasons why over the last few years it has become more of a problem to balance income and expenditure. Indeed, the ICRC began the year under review with a cumulative deficit of almost 25 million Swiss francs carried over from 1997.

In the course of 1998, however, the ICRC succeeded in reversing the overall negative trend observed since the mid-90s. Field expenditure dropped significantly as compared with the previous year, while income remained at a similar level. This resulted in a below average (less than 80%) expenditure-versus-budget implementation rate, but it also meant that the ICRC was able to reduce its cumulative deficit from 25 million to 2 million Swiss francs.

Particularly low implementation rates were recorded for programmes in Somalia, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan, where severe political and security constraints led to the frequent suspension of some if not all ICRC activities. However, the low implementation rates of certain ICRC field operations in 1998 should in no way be interpreted as reflecting a decrease in humanitarian needs worldwide. On the contrary, the ICRC began work in new theatres of operation, but none of those where it was already involved could be removed from the list of the organization's field activities.

Sources of funding

The ICRC pursued its strategy of diversifying its sources of funding in 1998. Within the existing donor network, particular emphasis was placed on gaining access to new budget lines, especially in the areas of disaster preparedness and preventive action and for mines-related programmes, while at the same time an effort was made to secure financial support from potential donor countries. The result of these endeavours can be summarized as follows.

* ASEAN: Association of South-East Asian Nations
Among traditional donors, there was a further increase in funding by governments, mainly due to the additional funds obtained through the special appeal entitled "Assistance for Mine Victims". This increase was, however, offset by a decrease in European Commission funding, attributable to the continuing fall in emergency food-aid requirements.

Efforts to diversify the existing donor network by enlisting the support of additional countries such as certain Gulf States, some Central and Eastern European countries and several members of ASEAN have not yet borne fruit, partly because of the deteriorating economic situation in some of those regions.

The decision to launch, as in 1997, a special appeal for funds to provide assistance to mine victims proved very successful, because in the momentum created by the Ottawa treaty new budget lines were made available by both governments and supranational donors, such as the European Union through the European Commission. The ICRC is concerned, however, about the possibility that these new sources of funding may one day run dry, while the problem of anti-personnel mines remains unresolved and assistance for mine victims will still be needed for years to come.

Support from National Societies increased slightly thanks to joint fundraising campaigns, again mainly for mine-related activities. On the other hand cooperation with National Societies in the field stabilized, as security constraints and the overall decline in assistance programmes ruled out any significant increase in the number of joint programmes. During the year under review 32 projects were delegated to 13 National Societies in connection with 14 ICRC operations. In addition, 21 bilateral projects were implemented by 10 National Societies under ICRC coordination in four different regions of the world.

Funding from the private sector was on the same level as the previous year. A special effort was made to approach various foundations, which responded very favourably to specific funding requests. Corporate donations grew at a
similar rate. Partnership arrangements such as those with UEFA,* the International Road Transport Union, and especially Rotary International proved very successful from the financial as well as the public relations standpoint. Several National Societies received special "tailor-made" ICRC support for the running of their private fundraising campaigns, which undoubtedly led to a significant increase in their subsequent contributions to the ICRC budgets. The Foundation for the ICRC received several major donations, 20% of which went straight to ICRC programmes, whereas the remaining 80% served to increase the Foundation's capital.

Reporting to donors

Efforts to keep donors regularly and fully informed about the activities, thinking and concerns of the ICRC were maintained, with the production of documents on a number of themes in addition to those describing activities in various geographical areas. Specific information was provided in particular in two special appeals (concerning the earthquakes in Afghanistan and assistance for mine victims respectively) and four budget extension appeals (Irian Jaya, Sudan and two related to the Kosovo crisis). In September a renewed emergency appeal was launched to supplement the 1998 Emergency Appeals sent out earlier in the year. Quarterly reports were issued to provide intermediate information on all ICRC field activities, together with some 50 updates which contained details on new emergency situations and other developments in the humanitarian sphere. Finally, six special reports were produced to enhance understanding of the ICRC's approach in specific geographical contexts and/or with regard to particular themes. Examples of these are: Ethiopia; The issue of missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; The role of a neutral intermediary in Colombia; and Stemming the tide of violence (the ICRC's activities in relation to the international community's preventive strategies).

All this information was backed up by direct contacts and networking with the ICRC's donor community. Eleven meetings were held to brief representatives of the Permanent Missions in Geneva on specific country operations, and to present such topics as the Avenir plan of action, the new ICRC evaluation concept, global security constraints, and the evolution of the financial situation in the course of 1998. In addition, regular contacts were maintained with governments and National Societies, not only in Geneva but also in the world's capitals, and increasingly by means of field visits.

* UEFA: Union of European Football Associations
Dialogue with donors

In June the ICRC convened a second Humanitarian Forum at the Wolfsberg Centre, Switzerland. As in 1997, the object of the Forum was to promote dialogue among high-level humanitarian and political players by encouraging an informal exchange of views and fostering a spirit of openness. Topics on the agenda focused on possible frameworks and mechanisms for supportive strategies between political and humanitarian actors. In parallel, the ICRC held two informal meetings at the highest working level with its principal donor governments, in The Hague in spring and in Stockholm in autumn. This followed an initiative taken by the ICRC in 1997 when the first workshop of this kind was organized jointly with DANIDA* in Copenhagen. Issues such as the ICRC’s Avenir study and the corresponding implementation process, the ICRC’s objectives, needs, priorities and operational plans for 1999, matters relating to standards of quality and cost-effectiveness, the annual financial appeals procedures, the recently introduced enterprise resource planning system, the broadening of the ICRC’s donor base, the linkage with the OCHA* Consolidated Appeal Process, and the coordination of donor reporting and accountability requests were just some of the subjects discussed during the meetings. The informal nature of these discussions allowed for a very frank exchange of views and enhanced mutual understanding of the requirements and constraints of both sides. It was decided to continue this exchange of ideas on a regular basis. For National Societies taking an active part in international humanitarian operations, two week-long meetings for some 30 representatives were organized jointly in Geneva by the Federation and the ICRC, as has been the case for several years now. The goal of the meetings was to share in-depth information and opinions on operational developments and to strengthen cooperation and rapid response mechanisms.

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* OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
* DANIDA: Danish International Development Agency
Finance

The final conceptual phase of the ICRC’s new financial system was completed in June 1998. During the first half of the year day-to-day activities and services were restricted so as to concentrate all available resources on this ambitious project.

The financial accounting system put in place will ultimately comply with international accounting standards. Activity-based costing makes it possible to determine with increasing precision the actual cost of operations and projects both at headquarters and in the field. It will also lead to a significant improvement in the content of the financial information made available to the public, after an initial consolidation phase required to carry out checks on the quality and relevance of the data.

Work on the configuration of the financial modules of the integrated software package selected to support the new system, together with the test phase, continued at headquarters throughout the year. In the field, two relatively simple software applications were installed in every delegation to gather the data required to operate the new financial system. The first was designed to collect accounting data compatible with the activity-based costing system, and the other was a staff time-reporting application. The information produced by the latter is essential for determining actual costs.

From July 1998 considerable effort was invested in training the staff who would be working with the new system, both at headquarters and in the field.

By the end of the year the new financial system and the tools necessary for it to function were ready to be put into effect as from 1 January 1999. In view of the scale of the changes made, however, the system was to be implemented gradually so as to allow for stringent checking of the information produced and above all to ensure a sound basis for future development.
Information technology

Following the outsourcing of information technology services in spring 1997 and the launch in autumn of the same year of a project to implement an integrated management software package, it became necessary to strengthen and consolidate the conception, coordination, controlling and monitoring structures of the ICRC's information and communication systems. These tasks were assigned to a new unit directly responsible to the Director-General.

Implementation of the integrated management software package provided the Human Resources Division with new tools which covered a large part of its needs throughout 1998. It also made it possible to complete the first phase in the parametrization of the finance, and to some extent the logistic, modules.

A "Year 2000" project was set up, under the regular supervision of the ICRC Directorate, to examine the measures that had to be taken to minimize the effects of the millennium bug. The level of preparedness in that regard may be considered satisfactory.

The worldwide communications network was further extended, enabling about 70 delegations and sub-delegations to communicate with headquarters by electronic mail and to use ICRC databases.
The accounts and financial tables for 1998 are presented in the new format introduced the previous year. The aim is to produce a comprehensive public financial statement, taking into consideration both general developments in this regard and the needs expressed by certain donors and partners. With the introduction of the new financial system in 1999, further modifications will be needed so as to bring it in line eventually with international accounting standards.

The 1998 financial year

Various trends - most of them favourable, and some contradictory - emerged during the 1998 financial year.

The first was the decrease in expenditure at headquarters, which fell from 135.5 million Swiss francs in 1997 to 132.9 million in 1998. This resulted from the decision to gradually scale down the number of staff and to carry out a critical review of fixed costs. The cutback was achieved despite the particularly large number of major projects carried out during the period (start of implementation of the new strategic plan, planning and evaluation, revision of management systems). Consequently, considering the resources available, several minor projects at headquarters had to be abandoned.

In the field, the very rapid evolution of situations and needs called for even greater flexibility on the part of all the units concerned. However, because of the lack of basic security guarantees, certain important operations (notably those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Afghanistan) underwent considerable fluctuations in terms of volume of activities, which was often below that anticipated. This, together with a quantitative downturn in aid programmes and a reduction in fixed costs, resulted in an overall decrease in expenditure (cash expenditure: 446.1 million Swiss francs in 1998 as compared with 511.6 million in 1997; expenditure in kind/services: 47.5 million in 1998 as compared with 39.6 million in 1997).

Fortunately, the decline in contributions to the headquarters and field budgets taken together was proportionally smaller than the decrease in expenditure (total cash contributions: 578.1 million Swiss francs in 1998 as compared with 599 million in 1997). This led to a significant improvement in the financial situation, which had deteriorated steadily over the previous few years. It also made it possible to compensate for the use in 1997 of part of the provision made to cover
EXPENDITURE ACCORDING TO TYPE OF ACTIVITY IN 1998
(including contributions in kind and services)
in millions of Swiss francs

158.1 = 25.2%
Relief activities

95.2 = 15.2%
Health activities

49.0 = 7.8%
Research, development, promotion and dissemination of international humanitarian law

180.5 = 28.8%
Protection, coordination of operations and Central Tracing Agency

19.6 = 3.1%
Communication and relations with international organizations

22.8 = 3.7%
Cooperation with National Societies

60.9 = 9.7%
Support activities, management and allocations for risks and investments

40.4 = 6.5%
Operational support for delegations

Total: Sfr 626.5 million

EXPENDITURE BY REGION IN 1998
(including contributions in kind and services)
in millions of Swiss francs

134.2 = 21.4%
Headquarters/support for field activities

210.8 = 33.7%
Africa

50.3 = 8.0%
Eastern Europe and Central Asia

67.1 = 10.7%
Western and Central Europe and the Balkans

35.4 = 5.7%
Middle East and North Africa

92.8 = 14.8%
Asia and the Pacific*

35.9 = 5.7%
The Americas

Total: Sfr 626.5 million

* Except Central Asia
shortfalls in the funding of operations. This provision is a management tool which is indispensable to guarantee that the ICRC has the greatest possible capacity to take action in emergency situations, and occasionally to allow the advance funding of certain programmes.

The improvement in the financial situation mentioned above led to an easing of the cash position, a reduction in the number of temporarily underfunded operations and an increase in the number of those with temporary surplus financing.

The last point worthy of mention is the considerable increase in the total assets tied up, mainly because of the investment required for two major information technology projects. One of these concerned management systems and the other the processing of data relating to protection programmes.

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## 1. BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998
(in Swiss francs)

### ASSETS

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### LIABILITIES

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<td>Balance at beginning of year</td>
<td>4.3.15</td>
<td>1,796,993</td>
<td>1,580,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of income over expenses</td>
<td>4.3.16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>216,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>288,273,370</td>
<td>272,621,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust funds - creditors</td>
<td></td>
<td>730,877</td>
<td>730,192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES IN 1998
(in Swiss francs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headquarter</th>
<th>in cash</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>in kind</th>
<th>in services</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>in kind and services</th>
<th>Grand total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Activities based on or directly related to the Geneva Conventions and other instruments of international humanitarian law

Protection activities,
Central Tracing Agency and coordination of operations
-18,865,181
-149,882,123
-168,747,304
-2,039,765
-170,787,069

Health activities
-8,001,816
-68,455,292
-76,457,108
-11,420,979
-86,878,087

Relief activities
-5,283,433
-118,224,736
-123,508,169
-2,800,177
-136,308,346

Cooperation within the Movement
-523,562
-20,455,124
-20,978,686
-502,665
-21,481,351

International humanitarian law:
Implementation, research and development
-7,455,114
-7,455,114
-230,415
-7,685,529
-8,015,944

Promotion of international humanitarian law
-13,373,616
-24,754,879
-38,128,495
-1,522,596
-40,641,091

Relations with international organizations
-4,479,578
-4,479,578
-4,479,578
-64,401
-9,025,527

Communication
-14,872,492
-14,872,492
-14,872,492
-213,210
-15,085,702

Operational support at delegations
-37,134,123
-37,134,123
-37,134,123
-230,415
-37,364,538

Support activities
-41,827,871
-41,827,871
-41,827,871
-865,573
-42,693,444

Financial management and general services
-18,183,979
-18,183,979
-18,183,979
-18,183,979
-18,183,979

Allocation to headquarters budget
-27,228,907
-27,228,907
-27,228,907
-27,228,907
-27,228,907

Total expenditure
-132,866,642
-446,135,184
-579,001,826
-27,075,670
-20,416,493
-626,493,989
-647,116,897
-39,577,887
-686,694,784

Total for all activities
-14,413,609
13,534,305
-879,304
0
0
-879,304
-48,077,999
0
-48,077,999

Allocation from field budget
27,228,907
27,228,907
27,228,907
27,228,907
31,224,153

Movement of funds for investments and provisions
-12,655,891
-12,655,891
-12,655,891
-12,655,891
3,731,070

Attribution to foundations/funds
-1,700,000
-1,700,000
-1,700,000
-1,700,000
-1,700,000

Financial income and re-invoiced costs
1,996,316
5,432,156
7,428,472
7,428,472
9,471,076

Other income
3,298,811
3,637,084
6,935,895
6,935,895
6,935,895

Other expenditure
-5,454,534
-5,454,534
-5,454,534
-5,454,534
-5,454,534

Operational surplus/(deficit)
0
22,603,545
22,603,545
22,603,545
-4,448,690

Decrease of operations with temporary deficit financing
-13,297,567
-13,297,567
-13,297,567
-13,297,567
-4,453,729

Decrease/increase of operations with temporary surplus financing
-9,556,891
-9,556,891
-9,556,891
-9,556,891
9,047,293

Regularisations of operations with temporary deficit/surplus financing
250,913
250,913
250,913
250,913
71,711

Excess of income over expenses
0
0
0
0
216,585
216,585

375
### 3. CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR 1998

(in Swiss francs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash flow from operating activities</th>
<th>notes</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of income over expenses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>49,480,650</td>
<td>-9,556,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation of fixed assets</td>
<td>4.3.8</td>
<td>6,476,538</td>
<td>5,243,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraordinary income and expenditure, net</td>
<td></td>
<td>-385,058</td>
<td>-396,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation/use of provisions and funds for investments</td>
<td></td>
<td>12,655,890</td>
<td>-3,731,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Operating surplus before changes in working capital</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>18,747,370</td>
<td>1,332,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/decrease of current assets</td>
<td></td>
<td>13,940,034</td>
<td>-6,119,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease of short-term liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>-6,061,212</td>
<td>-176,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease of operations with temporary deficit financing</td>
<td>4.3.6</td>
<td>13,297,567</td>
<td>4,453,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase/decrease of operations with temporary surplus financing</td>
<td>4.3.6</td>
<td>9,556,891</td>
<td>-9,047,293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cash flow from investing activities |       | -17,943,643 | -3,751,992 |
| Investment in fixed assets          | 4.3.8 | -18,169,684 | -2,468,573 |
| Sale of fixed assets                | 4.3.8 | 289,013     | 12,755     |
| Investment in financial assets      | 4.3.7 | -62,972     | -1,296,174 |

| Cash flow from financing activities |       | -200,000    | -200,000   |
| Decrease of long-term liabilities   |       | -200,000    | -200,000   |

| Net variation of cash and bank deposits |       | 31,337,007  | -13,508,853 |

| Cash and bank deposits as at January 1, 1998/1997 |       | 66,525,380  | 80,034,233   |
| Cash and bank deposits as at December 31, 1998/1997 |       | 97,862,387  | 66,525,380   |
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 of 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 the 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 59 at the end of 1998.

4.2 Significant accounting policies

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></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 recognized if received within 15 days of the following calendar year.

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 expenditure.

The principal rates of exchange are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>1.3720</td>
<td>1.4547</td>
<td>1.4740</td>
<td>1.4488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>0.8257</td>
<td>0.8255</td>
<td>0.8135</td>
<td>0.8410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>2.2700</td>
<td>2.4050</td>
<td>2.4200</td>
<td>2.3700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRF</td>
<td>0.2462</td>
<td>0.2470</td>
<td>0.2430</td>
<td>0.2501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
<td>1.6200</td>
<td>1.6250</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 (Sfr).

#### 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>97,937,051</td>
<td>66,737,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and current accounts held by delegations</td>
<td>1,826,306</td>
<td>892,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time deposits</td>
<td>11,661,883</td>
<td>14,793,371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84,448,862</td>
<td>51,051,758</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>23,675,870</td>
<td>22,100,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other current assets</td>
<td>1,070,239</td>
<td>1,962,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for securities market fluctuations</td>
<td>-3,604,313</td>
<td>-3,486,430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Market value of securities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36,787,271</td>
<td>32,733,133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.3 Accounts receivable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, organizations, foundations and funds</td>
<td>2,849,673</td>
<td>5,075,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withholding tax and recoverable levies</td>
<td>448,759</td>
<td>474,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarantee deposits</td>
<td>704,601</td>
<td>854,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts receivable, social security and insurance contributions</td>
<td>2,656,878</td>
<td>2,929,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance payments to expatriates on mission</td>
<td>2,274,814</td>
<td>2,308,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for doubtful accounts</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>2,877,318</td>
<td>3,247,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for depreciation of medical supplies</td>
<td>-2,000,000</td>
<td>-2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and telecommunications equipment</td>
<td>1,940,863</td>
<td>1,742,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle fleet in Geneva and Brussels for use in operational activities</td>
<td>1,795,740</td>
<td>3,326,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>-31,681</td>
<td>150,938</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>35,022,098</td>
<td>45,903,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance payments, headquarters and field</td>
<td>3,683,980</td>
<td>3724024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.6. Operations with temporary surplus/deficit financing
 Contributions are defined as non earmarked as long as they are remitted for a specific operation at the country level. Below this level they are considered as earmarked. Taking into account this definition, the balances brought forward are disclosed at December 31, 1998 as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations with temporary deficit financing</th>
<th>Operations with temporary surplus financing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-earmarked balances brought forward (country level)</td>
<td>3,538,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earmarked balances brought forward (country level)</td>
<td>28,548,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total as at December 31, 1998</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,086,762</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total as at December 31, 1997</strong></td>
<td><strong>45,384,329</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.7 Financial assets
This is a deposit initially totalling Sfr 30,000,000 booked on October 1, 1996 and maturing on September 30, 1999. The deposit value as on September 30, 1998 is fully guaranteed by the banking institution administrating the deposit.

4.3.8 Fixed assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Furniture and other equipment</th>
<th>Real estate</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book value</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at January 1, 1998</td>
<td>25,753,905</td>
<td>42,206,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions during 1998</td>
<td>18,169,684</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposals</td>
<td>-66,846</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as at December 31, 1998</strong></td>
<td>43,856,743</td>
<td>42,206,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accumulated depreciation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at January 1, 1998</td>
<td>-20,200,539</td>
<td>-8,194,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation during 1998</td>
<td>-5,168,373</td>
<td>-1,308,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as at December 31, 1998</strong></td>
<td>-25,368,912</td>
<td>-9,502,760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Net book value as at December 31, 1998** | **51,191,598** |
| **Net book value as at December 31, 1997** | **39,565,302** |

An exceptional depreciation has been recorded in 1998 on the headquarters equipment for an amount of Sfr 2,649,399. This operation has been made to comply with the new fixed assets procedure that will be implemented as from January 1, 1999.

One of the buildings at the headquarters in Geneva with a net book value of Sfr 13,338,000 on December 31, 1998, is subject to a mortgage note tendered as collateral for the respective building.
4.3.9 Accounts payable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governments</td>
<td>9,086,831</td>
<td>9,228,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, organizations, foundations and funds</td>
<td>499,224</td>
<td>596,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppliers</td>
<td>11,824,818</td>
<td>11,823,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social security and insurance contributions</td>
<td>25,539,935</td>
<td>25,359,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff vacation accrual</td>
<td>22,736,417</td>
<td>19,858,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry items</td>
<td>1,714,467</td>
<td>1,781,870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.10 Accrued expenses and deferred income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accrued expenses and deferred income</td>
<td>14,399,754</td>
<td>23,214,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid contributions</td>
<td>498,957</td>
<td>993,714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.11 Long-term liabilities

This is a mortgage loan on one of the buildings at the headquarters in Geneva. Interest amounted to Sfr 435,625 in 1998 (Sfr 445,790 in 1997).

4.3.12 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 January 1, 1998</td>
<td>83,689,558</td>
<td>6,132,651</td>
<td>1,566,459</td>
<td>91,388,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/release during 1998</td>
<td>-1,394,838</td>
<td>-2,234,994</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3,629,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocations during 1998</td>
<td>12,028,016</td>
<td>2,248,504</td>
<td></td>
<td>14,276,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at December 31, 1998</td>
<td>94,322,736</td>
<td>6,146,161</td>
<td>1,566,459</td>
<td>102,035,356</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.13 Funds for investments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at January 1, 1998</td>
<td>45,839,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use/release during 1998</td>
<td>-45,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocations during 1998</td>
<td>1,891,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance as at December 31, 1998</td>
<td>47,686,184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Additional notes

4.4.1 Taxes
The ICRC is exempt from taxes in Switzerland and most countries in which its delegations are based.

4.4.2 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.

4.4.3 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 the 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 external auditors to the Assembly of the members of

The International Committee of the Red Cross

As external auditors of your association, we have examined the accounting records and the financial statements (balance sheet, statement of income and expenses, cash flow statement and notes) of the International Committee of the Red Cross for the year ended 31 December 1998.

These financial statements are the responsibility of the Committee. Our responsibility is to express an opinion of 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.

In our opinion, the accounting records and financial statements comply with the law and the articles of incorporation.

We recommend that the financial statements submitted to you be approved.

KPMG Fides Peat

David J W Colledge
Chartered Accountant

Stéphane Gard
Expert-comptable diplômé

Geneva, 12 April 1999

Enclosures:
Financial statements (balance sheet, statement of income and expenses, cash flow statement and notes)
5. HEADQUARTERS FINANCIAL STRUCTURE IN 1998
Budget/expenditure in cash, kind, services (in Swiss francs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headquarters expenses by activity</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>amendments</td>
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<td>1.6 Promotion of international humanitarian law</td>
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<td>1.7 Relations with international organizations</td>
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<td>1.8 Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Support activities</td>
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<td>5.4 Funds for investments for furniture and equipment</td>
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<td>5.5 Allocation to provisions for redemption of actives</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Budget</td>
<td>Cash expenditure</td>
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<td><strong>activities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Information</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protection</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>with National</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,643,321</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Societies</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,643,321</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Operational</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,643,321</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>support</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,643,321</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overheads</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,643,321</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total cash</strong></td>
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AND INCOME IN 1998
delegated projects
francs)

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<th>Cash income</th>
<th>Reports of operations</th>
<th>Contributions spent</th>
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AFRICA
- Angola
- Burundi
- Congo-Brazzaville
- Congo, Dem. Rep. of
- Ethiopia (incl. Eritrea)
- Liberia
- Rwanda
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Uganda
- Ahdžan (regional)
- Dakar (regional)
- Harare (regional)
- Lagos (regional)
- Nairobi (regional)
- Pretoria (regional)
- Yaoundé (regional)
- Mozambique
- Contingency
- General use

THE AMERICAS
- Colombia
- Peru
- Brasil (regional)
- Buenos Aires (regional)
- Guatemala City (regional)
- Washington (regional)
- Panama
- Mexico
- Contingency
- General use

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
- Afghan conflict (incl. Pakistan)
- Cambodia
- Sri Lanka
## 6. FIELD EXPENDITURE

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<th>Budget</th>
<th>Cash expenditure</th>
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<td>Emergency Appeal</td>
<td>Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment</td>
<td>Dissemination Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash/Kind/services</td>
<td>Health activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relief activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperation with National Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operational support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overheads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total cash expenditure</td>
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### WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, BALKANS

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<tr>
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<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Cash/Kind/services</th>
<th>Total cash expenditure</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>42,227,161</td>
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### EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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<td>17,320,524</td>
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### MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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388
AND INCOME IN 1998 (CONTINUED)

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7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1998
(in Swiss francs)

7.0 Summary of all contributions

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### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1998
(in Swiss francs)

#### 7.1 Governments

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### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1998
(in Swiss francs)

#### 7.1 Governments (continued)

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<th>Total kind</th>
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Total from governments  | 104,259,781         | 369,516,089       | 473,775,870 | 10,920,994 | 1,627,333       | 486,324,197 |

#### 7.2 European Commission

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Total from European Commission | 49,685,508 | 2,941,050 | 52,626,558
7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1998
(in Swiss francs)

7.3 International organizations

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7.5 National Societies

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## 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1998
(in Swiss francs)

### 7.5 National Societies (continued)

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### 7. CONTRIBUTIONS IN 1998

#### (in Swiss francs)

#### 7.6 Public sources

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**Total from public sources**: 3,540,500

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**Total from private sources**: 16,120,739 1,032,085 17,152,824
### 8. CONTRIBUTIONS IN SERVICES AND TO DELEGATED PROJECTS IN 1998

(in Swiss francs)

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396
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 1998:**

All relief and medical goods received as contributions in kind or purchased by the ICRC and inventoried in the country of final destination between January 1 and December 31, 1998. 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 116,772,640 therefore corresponds to the grand total given in the table "Relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1998".

9.2 **Relief and medical supplies dispatched by the ICRC in 1998:**

All relief and medical goods received as contributions in kind or purchased by the ICRC and inventoried in the country of final destination between January 1 and December 31, 1998.

9.3 **Relief and medical supplies distributed by the ICRC in 1998:**

All relief and medical goods distributed by the ICRC in the field between January 1 and December 31, 1998. These goods were either purchased or received in kind during 1998 or taken from stocks already constituted at the end of 1997.
## 9.1 Contributions in Kind Received and Purchases Made by the ICRC in 1998

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<th>TENTS</th>
<th>KITCHEN SETS</th>
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<th>OTH. RELIEF GOODS</th>
<th>TOTAL RELIEF (Tonnes)</th>
<th>MEDICAL (Tonnes)</th>
<th>GRAND TOTAL (Tonnes)</th>
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<td>588.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>658,525</td>
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<td>111.9</td>
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<td>87,894</td>
<td>984,424</td>
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<td>22,310</td>
<td>732,632</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
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<td>240</td>
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<td>11.9</td>
<td>4,810.2</td>
<td>7,761,414</td>
<td>2,129,616</td>
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<td>513,744</td>
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<td>7,200</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<td>1,464,377</td>
<td>3,906,513</td>
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<td>52,223</td>
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<td>760</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>12,280</td>
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<td>38,460</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>32.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,470,133</td>
<td>612,239</td>
<td>4,082,372</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,270,398</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>1,323,898</td>
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<td>436.5</td>
<td>7,537,712</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7,537,782</td>
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<td>2,941,050</td>
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<td>United Nations (WFP, HCR, UNICEF)</td>
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<td>3,172</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3,557,249</td>
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<td>Other donors</td>
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<td>23,663</td>
<td>4,375</td>
<td></td>
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<td>260.4</td>
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<td>1,039,413</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,039,483</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>411,295</td>
<td>5,425</td>
<td>14,396</td>
<td>140.9</td>
<td>5,835.1</td>
<td>21,879,992</td>
<td>2,241,890</td>
<td>24,121,882</td>
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<td>4,952.1</td>
<td>305,640</td>
<td>1,784</td>
<td>16,676</td>
<td>150.8</td>
<td>41,147.1</td>
<td>29,330,032</td>
<td>20,315,136</td>
<td>49,645,168</td>
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<td>ICRC purchases (cash for kind)</td>
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<td>800</td>
<td>20,335</td>
<td>119.7</td>
<td>4,276.6</td>
<td>30,940,658</td>
<td>12,064,932</td>
<td>43,005,590</td>
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<td>6,397.1</td>
<td>553,670</td>
<td>2,584</td>
<td>37,011</td>
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<td>45,423.7</td>
<td>60,270,690</td>
<td>32,380,068</td>
<td>92,650,758</td>
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<td>51,465.1</td>
<td>6,397.1</td>
<td>964,965</td>
<td>8,009</td>
<td>51,407</td>
<td>411.4</td>
<td>51,258.8</td>
<td>82,150,682</td>
<td>34,621,958</td>
<td>116,772,640</td>
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</table>
9.2 RELIEF SUPPLIES DISPATCHED BY THE ICRC IN 1998
(by receiving countries, according to stock entry date)
COUNTRIES

GIFTS
MEDICAL
(Sfr)

AFRICA
Angola
Cameroon, Cent. Afr. Rep., Chad, Eq. Guinea
Republic of the Congo
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Còte d'Ivoire
Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Guinea Bissau
Kenya, Tanzania
Liberia
Madagascar, Comoros
Mali
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal, Cape Verde, Guinea
Sierra Leone
Somalia
Sudan
Uganda
Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho
Regional & emergency stocks in Kenya

RELIEF
(Tonnes)

TOTAL
(Sfr)

15,134,941

25,802,844

23,895.6

16,273,721

34,044,796

31,752.6

50,318,517

32.7

563
24,822

0.3
4.5

1,424,665
95,455

2,226.3
164.7

1,441,054

1,730.1

1,520,382
730,355
2,004,841
492,649

2,964.0
144.0
389.0
174.8

233,220

26.6

407,304
15,910
777,531
2,913,908
820
5,076
22,081
562,596
103,911
149,606
39,269
106
544,136
1,860
3,178,609
26,591
1,078,254
1,574,819
1,948,569
269,748
1,629
1,512,608

190,107
100,004
1,623,395
837,503
47,435
3,625
49,500
338,056
92,188
181,874
22,523
15,591
545,252
45,772
7,438,354
124,655
2,057,109
3,931,229
3,029,815
2,626,753
3,955
2,498,149

57.0
38.5
541.6
635.5
20.0
1.1
62.5
130.6
21.4
146.6
15.4
3.0
298.7
12.3
10,856.4
232.7
902.8
3,702.1
942.1
2,537.5
0.5
2,737.3

429,614
15,910
777,531
2,913,908
820
5,076
22,081
562,596
103,911
149,606
39,269
106
544,136
1,860
3,178,609
26,591
1,131,254
1,574,819
3,012,039
269,748
1,629
1,512,608

464,053
100,004
1,623,958
862,325
47,435
3,625
49,500
338,056
1,516,853
277,329
22,523
15,591
545,252
45,772
8,879,408
124,655
3,577,491
4,661,584
5,034,656
3,119,402
3,955
2,731,369

89.7
38.5
541.9
640.0
20.0
1.1
62.5
130.6
2,247.7
311.3
15.4
3.0
298.7
12.3
12,586.5
232.7
3,866.8
3,846.1
1,331.1
2,712.3
0.5
2,763.9

893,667
115,914
2,401,489
3,776,233
48,255
8,701
71,581
900,652
1,620,764
426,935
61,792
15,697
1,089,388
47,632
12,058,017
151,246
4,708,745
6,236,403
8,046,695
3,389,150
5,584
4,243,977

119,100

1.6

369,660

3,197,838

1,978.7

369,660

3,316,938

1,980.3

3,686,598

119,100

1.6

148,878
58,365

1,262.6
4.9
673.1
38.1

148,878
58,365

162,417

2,572,511
13,774
465,881
145,672

162,417

2,691,611
13,774
465,881
145,672

1,264.2
4.9
673.1
38.1

2,840,489
72,139
465,881
308,089

53,000
1,063,470

1,101,110

5,390,497

3,711.0

4,479,853

7,686,217

2,223.4

4,479,853

13,076,714

16,856.6

17,556,567

4,038,902

3,444.5

1,295,827

262.6

3,839,906
277,163
2,206
130,040

3.9

1,487
229,051

10,922.2
13.8
0.8
134.8
3.0
24.2
2,046.8

3,839,906
277,163
2,206
130,040

55,768

6,450,510
33,445
2,320
532,238
8,460
33,803
625,441

1,487
229,051

10,489,412
33,445
2,320
1,828,065
8,460
33,803
681,209

14,366.7
13.8
0.8
397.4
3.0
24.2
2,050.7

14,329,318
.310,608
4,526
1,958,105
8,460
35,290
910,260

4,951,814

6,526.7

7,052,413

17,273,806

45,821.8

8,153,523

22,225,620

52,348.5

30,379,143

18,688
12,849,037
393,343
4,012,738

4.7
42,831.6
196.8
2,788.7

79,385
7,175,017
8,314
890,807

18,688
13,185,813
393,343
8,627,776

4.7
47,323.0
196.8
4,824.0

98,073
20,360,830
401,657
9,518,583

531,140

336,776

4,491.4

569,970

4,615,038

2,035.3

79,385
6,643,877
8,314
320,837

2,000

2,968,892

2,719.4

1,587,068

4,746,605

5,577.3

1,589,068

7,715,497

8,296.7

9,304,565

2,000

161,980
93,600
1,806,959
443,336
154,998
119,754
188,265

130.4
72.0
1,853.6
299.0
119.1
20.0
225.3

154,131
253,443
405,923
183,368
198,488
9,706
382,009

596,760
652,050
1,178,886
1,053,294
1,022,094
10,584
232,937

712.4
485.5
1,392.9
1,565.8
1,277.2
0.8
142.7

156,131
253,443
405,923
183,368
198,488
9,706
382,009

758,740
745,650
2,985,845
1,496,630
1,177,092
130,338
421,202

842.8
557.5
3,246.5
1,864.8
1,396.3
20.8
368.0

914,871
999,093
3,391,768
1,679,998
1,375,580
140,044
803,211

207,737

3.6

3,756,133

1,563,380

563.7

3,756,133

1,771,117

567.3

5,527,250

3,228,427
29,557
466,776
9,459
21,914

725,441
557,340
242,503
33,486
4,610

316.4
146.2
94.1
6.3
0.7

3,228,427
29,557
466,776
9,459
21,914

725,441
765,077
242,503
33,486
4,610

316.4
149.8
94.1
6.3
0.7

3,953,868
794,634
709,279
42,945
26,524

32,380,068

60,270,690

80,060.5

34,621,958

82,150,682

111,802.0

116,772,640

Iraq
Israel (incl. occupied/autonomous territories)
Lebanon
Western Sahara
Yemen
GRAND TOTAL

(Sfr)

7,857.0

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

______________________

TOTAL DISPATCHED
MEDICAL
(Sfr)

273,946

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

Armenia
Azerbaijan
Georgia
Russian Federation
Tajikistan
Ukraine
Regional stock in the Caucasus

RELIEF
(Sfr)
(Tonnes)

8,241,952

Afghanistan
Cambodia
India
Indonesia
Pakistan
Philippines
Sri Lanka

EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

PURCHASES BY THE ICRC
MEDICAL
(Sfr)

22,310

Colombia
Haiti
Mexico
Peru

WEST. & CENT. EUROPE, BALKANS

KIND

RELIEF
(Sfr)
(Tonnes)

1,138,780

THE AMERICAS

Albania
Bosnia-Herzegovina
Croatia
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

IN

2,241,890

207,737

3.6

21,879,992

20,819.3

_______ ________ _______

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## 9.3 RELIEF SUPPLIES DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC IN 1998

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<th>COUNTRIES</th>
<th>MEDICAL</th>
<th>RELIEF</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<td></td>
<td>($Sfr)</td>
<td>($Sfr)</td>
<td>(Tonnes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AFRICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>17,261,245</td>
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<td>31,155.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>435,279</td>
<td>42,208</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon, Central African Rep., Chad, Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>16,587</td>
<td>28,278</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<td>861,253</td>
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<td>820</td>
<td>53,869</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>5,076</td>
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<td>53,283</td>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
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<td>14,202.7</td>
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<td>Kenya, Tanzania</td>
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<td>232.7</td>
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<td>Liberia</td>
<td>49,681</td>
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<td>Madagascar, Comoros</td>
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<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>3,968,846</td>
<td>10,951,756</td>
<td>14,202.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal, Cape Verde, Guinea</td>
<td>26,591</td>
<td>124,655</td>
<td>232.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>954,641</td>
<td>2,486,947</td>
<td>3,141.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>1,905,904</td>
<td>4,828,369</td>
<td>3,760.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>322,548</td>
<td>3,539,973</td>
<td>2,936.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho</td>
<td>1,629</td>
<td>8,705</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE AMERICAS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>370,933</td>
<td>3,343,947</td>
<td>1,983.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>148,878</td>
<td>2,691,611</td>
<td>1,264.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>58,365</td>
<td>13,773</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>465,880</td>
<td>673.1</td>
<td>465,880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>163,690</td>
<td>172,683</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASIA &amp; THE PACIFIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>4,494,858</td>
<td>16,166,208</td>
<td>22,318.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>277,678</td>
<td>33,445</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2,206</td>
<td>2,320</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>109,165</td>
<td>1,555,089</td>
<td>341.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1,905,904</td>
<td>4,828,369</td>
<td>3,760.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>322,548</td>
<td>3,539,973</td>
<td>2,936.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>241,461</td>
<td>526,455</td>
<td>2,013.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WESTERN &amp; CENTRAL EUROPE, BALKANS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>4,928,815</td>
<td>14,006,636</td>
<td>19,922.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>277,678</td>
<td>33,445</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1,905,904</td>
<td>4,828,369</td>
<td>3,760.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
<td>1,905,904</td>
<td>4,828,369</td>
<td>3,760.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EASTERN EUROPE &amp; CENTRAL ASIA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>1,689,051</td>
<td>11,480,816</td>
<td>11,779.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>203,818</td>
<td>1,359,866</td>
<td>1,605.1</td>
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<td>Georgia</td>
<td>327,661</td>
<td>1,304,363</td>
<td>1,161.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>691,088</td>
<td>4,993,055</td>
<td>4,926.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>182,313</td>
<td>2,276,064</td>
<td>2,281.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MIDDLE EAST &amp; NORTH AFRICA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>3,600,447</td>
<td>1,867,783</td>
<td>342.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel (including occupied/autonomous territories)</td>
<td>3,083,759</td>
<td>845,658</td>
<td>98.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>29,557</td>
<td>754,679</td>
<td>149.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sahara</td>
<td>455,758</td>
<td>229,350</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>21,914</td>
<td>4,610</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>36,635,071</td>
<td>85,358,249</td>
<td>108,342.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

400
10. SPECIAL FUNDS

10.1 FOUNDATION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securities</td>
<td>2,552,161</td>
<td>Inalienable capital:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(market value : Sfr 2,983,901)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,951,962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax Administration, Bern</td>
<td>12,803</td>
<td>- Allocation from 1998</td>
<td>689,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(withholding tax refund)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,641,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>468,127</td>
<td>Available funds:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Initial balance</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Allocation from 1998</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>61,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>330,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61,662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Securities</td>
<td>2,552,161</td>
<td>Inalienable capital:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(market value : Sfr 2,983,901)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,951,962</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax Administration, Bern</td>
<td>12,803</td>
<td>- Allocation from 1998</td>
<td>689,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(withholding tax refund)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,641,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>468,127</td>
<td>Available funds:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Initial balance</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Allocation from 1998</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>61,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>330,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>61,662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998**

<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>13,833</td>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges on purchase / sale of securities</td>
<td>9,143</td>
<td>Income from securities</td>
<td>77,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>2,380</td>
<td>Income from time deposits</td>
<td>2,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>4,870</td>
<td>Bank interest</td>
<td>2,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Profit on refund of securities</td>
<td>189,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Net profit on exchange rate</td>
<td>2,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,274,105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULT**

Gross excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998: 1,243,879
Allocation of net result on securities transactions to the inalienable capital: (189,467)
Allocation of 50 % of contributions to the inalienable capital in conformity with the Internal Regulations: (500,000)
Allocation of 30 % of contributions to the available funds in conformity with the Internal Regulations: (300,000)
Allocation of 20 % of contributions to the ICRC in conformity with the Internal Regulations: (200,000)
Statutory allocation to the ICRC of net excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998: 54,412
### 10.2 AUGUSTA FUND

#### BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></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>225,641</td>
<td></td>
<td>Inalienable capital</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>2,540</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provision</td>
<td>18,470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>8,278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation in 1998</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td>9,367</td>
<td>Florence Nightingale Medal Fund, current account:</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td></td>
<td>79,887</td>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,457</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>228,181</td>
<td>228,181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>247</td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>21,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of increase of the overall provision</td>
<td>1,089</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,336</td>
<td>21,793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998 | Sfr  | 20,457 |
# 10.3 FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDAL FUND

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>175,885</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stock of medals</td>
<td>43,186</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta Fund, current account</td>
<td>100,344</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>75,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>197,223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
<td>35,938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augusta Fund, current account</td>
<td>233,161</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation in 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPENDITURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of increase of the overall provision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| RECEIPTS                                              | Sfr |
|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Allocation of the excess of receipts over expenditure as at December 31, 1998 of the Augusta Fund, in accordance with the decision of the Twenty-first International Conference of the Red Cross | 20,457 |
| Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds | 16,651 |

| RESULT                                                   | Sfr |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998             | 35,938 |
BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998

ASSETS

Share of the overall capital of the special funds ........................................ 3,411,017

LIABILITIES

Capital .................................................................................................................. 1,632,629

Provision:
Balance brought forward from 1998 .................................................. 512,351
Reversal in 1998 ................................................................................................... (512,351)

Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:
Balance brought forward from 1997 .......................................................... 172,308
Allocation in 1998 .............................................................................................. 16,189

Receipts and expenditure account:
Balance brought forward from 1997 .......................................................... 531,249
Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998 .................................................. 816,545

International Committee of the Red Cross, current account .................. 242,097

3,411,017

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998

EXPENDITURE

Audit fees .............................................................................................................. 3,697
Share of increase of the overall provision ....................................................... 16,189

19,886

RECEIPTS

Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds ............. 324,080
Reversal of provision .......................................................................................... 512,351

836,431

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998 for attribution ........................................ 816,545
### Balance Sheet As at December 31, 1998

#### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>4,185,919</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Liabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capital:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>3,482,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
<td>150,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>169,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation in 1998</td>
<td>20,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Liabilities**                                                        | 3,633,602 |

| **Total Assets**                                                            | 4,185,919 |

### Receipts and Expenditure Account for 1998

#### Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>225,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>4,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenses</td>
<td>1,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of increase of the overall provision</td>
<td>20,079</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Expenditure**                                                       | 251,039 |

#### Receipts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>401,947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Receipts**                                                          | 401,947 |

#### Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
<td>150,908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998

<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>1,172,971</td>
<td>Initial capital</td>
<td>760,500</td>
</tr>
<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 1997</td>
<td>48,420</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allocation in 1998</td>
<td>5,621</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54,041</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>184,729</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
<td>105,626</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>68,075</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>290,355</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,172,971</td>
<td>1,172,971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>RECEIPTS</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>112,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of increase of the overall provision</td>
<td>5,620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6,890</td>
<td>112,516</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### RESULT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998 for attribution</td>
<td>105,626</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation in 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

403,139 403,139

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998

EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of increase of the overall provision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2,375

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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

38,811

RESULT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10.8 SPECIAL FUND FOR THE DISABLED

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998

ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>3,235,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross, current account</td>
<td>261,432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Assets: 3,497,143

LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial capital</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of the overall provision for portfolio variation:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>152,553</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocation in 1998</td>
<td>15,413</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts and expenditure account:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward from 1997</td>
<td>1,532,456</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998</td>
<td>254,376</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved funds:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia project</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh project</td>
<td>110,092</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>23,484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines appeal</td>
<td>208,769</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>542,345</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Liabilities: 1,786,832

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1998

3,497,143

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 1998

EXPENDITURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Addis Ababa project - Regional training centre</td>
<td>748,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ho Chi Minh project - Protheses production and training</td>
<td>289,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Nicaragua project - Prosthetic material</td>
<td>12,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit fees</td>
<td>4,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of increase of the overall provision</td>
<td>15,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme to be implemented as from 1999 Mines appeal</td>
<td>11,028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Expenditure: 1,081,214

RECEIPTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sfr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions received in 1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America - Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>343,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway - Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>332,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom - Ho Chi Minh project</td>
<td>89,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Societies:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway - Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>36,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>11,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addis Ababa project - billed costs</td>
<td>4,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of net revenue from the overall capital of the special funds</td>
<td>308,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal of reserved funds to cover accumulated expenses:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ho Chi Minh project</td>
<td>200,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Addis Ababa project</td>
<td>8,368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Receipts: 1,335,590

RESULT

Excess of receipts over expenditure in 1998: 254,376

* Contributions received in response to the Mines appeal
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Committee, composed of 15 to 25 Swiss citizens, defines the general policy and the principles which guide the activities of the institution.

The Assembly Council comprises the President, the permanent Vice-President, three Committee members and the Director General.

**Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President**, Doctor of Laws of Zurich University, *(member of the Committee since 1986).*

**Mr Eric Roethlisberger, permanent Vice-President**, Doctor of Political Science of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, *(1994).*

**Mrs Anne Petitpierre, Vice-President**, Doctor of Laws, barrister, Professor at the Law Faculty of the University of Geneva, *(1987).*

**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 "Institut de la Vie international", head of medico-social institutions, member of the International Association for Volunteer Effort, *(1986).*

**Mr Paolo Bernasconi**, Bachelor of Laws, barrister, professor of 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 Forster**, Doctor of Economics, Professor at the Graduate Institute for Development Studies in Geneva, *(1988).*

**Mr Jacques Moreillon**, Bachelor of Laws. Doctor of Political Science, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, former Director General at the ICRC, *(1988).*

**Mr Rodolphe de Haller**, Doctor of Medicine, former lecturer at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Geneva, former President of the Swiss Association against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases, *(1991).*

**Mr Daniel Thürer**, Master of Laws (Cambridge), Doctor of Laws, Professor at the University of Zurich, *(1991).*

**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).*

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1 As at 31 December 1998.
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 microbiology at the University of Basle, former President of the Federal Institute of Technology of Zurich, (1997).


Mrs Gabrielle Nanchen, Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Lausanne School of Social Studies, former member of the Swiss National Council (1998).

Mr Jean de Courten, Bachelor of Laws, former delegate and former Director of Operations at the ICRC (1998).

HONORARY MEMBERS: Mr Jean Pictet, Honorary Vice-President, Mr Maurice Aubert †, Mrs Denise Bindschedler-Robert, Mr Max Daetwyler, Mr Joseph Feldmann, Mr Athos Gallino, Mr Harald Huber ‡, Mr Henry Huguenin, Mr Rudolf Jäckli, Mr Pierre Keller, 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.

ASSEMBLY COUNCIL
Mr Cornelio Sommaruga, President
Mr Eric Roethlisberger, permanent Vice-President
Mr Ernst Brugger, member of the Committee

Mr Jacques Forster, member of the Committee
Mrs Kraus-Gurny, member of the Committee
Mr Paul Grossrieder, Director-General
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 1998, the fourth group of ICRC international advisers met in March and September. Its discussions focused on preparations for the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (to be held in 1999), the future of the ICRC, increasing acceptance of ICRC operational activities in the field, ICRC financing, follow up of the Rome Diplomatic Conference on the establishment of an International Criminal Court, human rights, international humanitarian law and the ICRC, and the future of the Henry Dunant Institute.

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 chief 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. Maclnnis, 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, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy to Africa, Special Adviser to the Director-General of UNESCO (Algeria).

Mr Bradman Weerakoon, former Presidential Adviser on International Relations (Sri Lanka).
MISSION

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.