



philippines

In the Philippines, where the ICRC has been working since 1982, the delegation assists and protects civilians displaced or otherwise affected by armed clashes between the government and insurgent groups, primarily on the southern island of Mindanao. It acts as a neutral intermediary between opposing forces in humanitarian matters, visits security detainees and works with the Philippine National Red Cross, through its network of regional chapters and local branches, to assist displaced people and promote compliance with IHL.

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	1,783
Assistance	2,603
Prevention	1,044
Cooperation with National Societies	626
General	-

► **6,055**

of which: Overheads 370

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	94%
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PERSONNEL

15	expatriates
79	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- monitored the situation in conflict-affected areas and endeavoured to increase knowledge of and respect for IHL and the ICRC among weapon bearers
- provided food to some 64,000 civilians and essential household items to some 67,000 civilians, in cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross
- carried out water and sanitation projects for some 113,000 IDPs, with the National Society
- shared a summary detention report with high-level authorities to raise their awareness of prison conditions and to mobilize support for prison reform
- visited some 62,000 detainees in 95 places of detention

CONTEXT

The year 2007 was dominated by the national elections held on 14 May and by ongoing political instability stemming from new allegations of corruption against the president. The UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions conducted a fact-finding mission in the country in February and submitted his findings to the authorities in October. Targeted killings of opposition party leaders, journalists and human rights activists persisted, as did conflict-related incidents, albeit of low intensity.

The civilian population living in conflict-prone areas continued to be affected by armed clashes between government forces and armed groups, which often caused displacement. Encounters between the military and the New People's Army (NPA) caused further deterioration of living conditions in remote areas inhabited by chronically vulnerable groups who often had access to few, if any, public services. Clashes between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao continued, while ongoing peace talks between the two parties had yet to yield results. On the island of Sulu, violence between the military and factions of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) resulted in the displacement of some 12,000 families, while implementation of the 1996 peace agreement between the two parties was still pending. The activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group and other armed groups presented a further challenge to State security.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)		CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM			
Detainees visited	62,001	<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>			
Detainees visited and monitored individually	520	Food	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	64,201	15% 70%
		Essential household items	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	92,330	13% 43%
	<i>of whom females</i>	Agricultural inputs and micro-economic initiatives	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	2,142	7%
	<i>of whom minors</i>	Water, sanitation and habitat projects	<i>Beneficiaries</i>	127,155	34% 33%
Number of visits carried out	197	WOUNDED AND SICK			
Number of places of detention visited	95	Admissions	<i>Patients</i>	181	44 19
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS		<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>			
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>		Patients receiving services	<i>Patients</i>	37	4
RCMs collected	2	Prostheses delivered	<i>Units</i>	30	4 1
RCMs distributed	6				

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC's main focus in the Philippines was to address the impact of armed conflict and internal violence on the civilian population by improving its access to the victims and reinforcing understanding of IHL among civilians and respect for that body of law by the armed forces and other weapon bearers.

The ICRC concentrated its presence in conflict-affected areas in order to monitor the situation, assist victims and make direct representations to weapon bearers regarding alleged violations of IHL. In cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross, the ICRC provided conflict-affected people with food and essential household items, worked to ensure access to safe water and proper sanitation facilities for IDPs and initiated livelihood-support projects in remote communities in Mindanao. It covered the medical costs of people wounded in conflict-related incidents, supplied hospitals with medical materials to treat such cases, mobilized external resources and stakeholders, and provided specialized surgery training to civilian and military medical professionals.

Visits to people detained in connection with the armed conflict and to military officials held in connection with attempted insurrection continued. Delegates assessed detainees' treatment and conditions of detention, paying special attention to the needs of women and minors. Urgent ad hoc improvements were made to prison infrastructure, such as increasing ventilation and installing bunk beds to alleviate the effects of severe overcrowding, and hygiene and recreational items were distributed. Recommendations made to the prison authorities included the rehabilitation of water supply systems and the provision of improved energy-saving stoves, and progress was made in implementing these measures. The ICRC also assisted the prison administration in mobilizing government support for further improvements. A summary detention report was finalized and handed over to the relevant authorities. Following the distribution of the report, the authorities began to address its recommendations.

The ICRC pursued efforts to promote knowledge of and respect for IHL among the armed forces, the police and various armed groups, concentrating on dissemination at field level. Field contacts with other humanitarian organizations and local NGOs were expanded to enhance coordination in responding to the needs of conflict victims. Dissemination sessions were also held for representatives of these organizations to explain the ICRC's role and mandate.

Sessions on IHL were conducted for local authorities and for college and university students. Law students and lecturers from various higher-education establishments participated in national and regional IHL events. The ICRC participated in national fora on the legal aspects of recruitment of child soldiers and initiated bilateral discussions with relevant authorities to support the implementation of the provisions of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, which entered into force in May 2006.

The National Society continued to be an essential partner for the ICRC in its operations. Cooperation with the Philippine Red Cross was consolidated through a sustained dialogue and operational meetings. In addition, the ICRC continued to assist the National Society's capacity-building efforts.

CIVILIANS

Regular contact was established and maintained with the military, armed groups, local government authorities, residents, religious representatives and other influential members of civil society to gain a better understanding of the humanitarian situation as it evolved in violence-affected areas. Whenever possible, and on a case-by-case basis, the ICRC communicated its concerns regarding the increased regularity of armed incidents to weapon bearers and civilian authorities and reminded them of their obligations under IHL. Thousands of civilians living in conflict-affected and conflict-prone areas participated in dissemination sessions on IHL.

Assisting IDPs and residents

The ongoing armed conflicts in the Philippines continued to affect the lives and livelihoods of civilians, who sought refuge from the fighting in places where they could stay for days or months. Frequent, repeated and long-term displacement in Mindanao meant that families had little or no access to their farms and the most vulnerable faced food insecurity. During armed clashes, homes were sometimes looted or burned and farm animals killed, leading to further deterioration of the economic security of these vulnerable communities.

Combined protection and economic-security missions enabled the ICRC and the National Society to monitor closely the needs of IDPs and residents affected by armed violence throughout the country. The ICRC coordinated with local authorities in delivering assistance to conflict-affected people. Concurrently and in cooperation with the respective local Red Cross chapters, the ICRC assisted IDPs where

the authorities could not provide for the population. Civilians in Mindanao, Luzon and Visayas with no or limited access to their means of livelihood received food and essential household items. IDPs in evacuation sites in Maguindanao, Sulu, North Cotabato and Samar provinces had access to safe water and proper sanitation facilities.

To help people in conflict-affected areas cope with the effects of violence, the ICRC initiated livelihood-support projects, following an assessment by an agronomist. At the end of March, the first project started in eastern Mindanao province. The beneficiaries received basic tools for cultivation, rice and corn seed, and training. Implementing these projects also helped the ICRC to better understand and respond to the needs of people living in conflict-affected areas.

- ▶ 64,201 conflict-affected IDPs (11,498 households) received food
- ▶ 67,105 conflict-affected IDPs (12,206 households) received essential household items
- ▶ 2,142 conflict-affected IDPs (400 households) benefited from agricultural and veterinary initiatives
- ▶ 113,250 conflict-affected IDPs benefited from water and sanitation projects

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC continued to visit detainees held in facilities under the responsibility of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), the provincial authorities, the Bureau of Corrections, the armed forces and the police. Confidential reports were submitted to the authorities following the visits. Particularly vulnerable detainees, such as minors, women, the elderly, the sick and the mentally ill, were closely monitored by the ICRC. The prison authorities used ICRC recommendations to implement improvements. Detainees who were monitored individually received visits from their relatives thanks to a programme run jointly with the Philippine Red Cross.

The ICRC completed a summary detention report focusing on the humanitarian consequences of judicial shortcomings and overcrowding and on health in prisons. In May, the ICRC started to distribute the report to the authorities concerned in order to raise their awareness of the conditions in most prisons. It was hoped that the report would support the BJMP by initiating a dialogue with the authorities and mobilizing the government and local experts to improve the prison system. High-level discussions between the relevant authorities and the ICRC continued throughout the year. The ICRC mobilized the support of members of the international community present in the Philippines in advancing the process of prison reform. The different branches of government expressed their willingness to follow the report's recommendations and to allocate more resources for prison reform. In November, plans to build a new jail in Quezon City to alleviate overcrowding were announced. Moreover, the BJMP made known its intention to allocate a budget to improve prison infrastructure and to increase both the health and the food budgets for detainees.

- ▶ 62,001 detainees visited, of whom 520 monitored individually (including 35 females and 14 minors) and 110 newly registered (including 21 females and 10 minors), during 197 visits to 95 places of detention
- ▶ 246 detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC support

Improving living conditions

Detainees benefited from ICRC-supported water and habitat projects carried out in cooperation with the BJMP and the Bureau of

Corrections to improve living conditions in prisons (a series of assessments in 30 jails was conducted and followed up by technical recommendations). Special attention was paid to improving ventilation, safe water supply and sleeping conditions. The health of detainees in 56 jails in Luzon, Mindanao and Visayas was monitored by the ICRC, and the authorities were alerted to any problems, with special emphasis on tuberculosis, nutritional diseases and mental illness. In some cases, jail infirmaries received medicines, medical equipment and cleaning materials and detainees received hygiene items. In particular, detainees displaying symptoms of scabies were treated accordingly. The ICRC repeatedly stressed the importance of a balanced diet and preventive health care for detainees, as well as the need to check for possible cases of tuberculosis. Prison staff received training in food safety, food economics and monitoring detainee health and were given guidelines for identifying and treating nutritional illnesses.

With the aim of improving conditions in jails, the BJMP and the ICRC agreed to launch two projects introducing biogas in prisons, which would also reduce the consumption of fuel in kitchens.

Detainees in prisons benefited from the distribution of hygiene and/or cleaning materials, games, books, other recreational items, medical supplies and/or kitchen utensils.

- ▶ 13,905 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects, including:
 - 4,404 detainees from the construction of septic tanks and a biogas plant in Manila City Jail
 - 2,207 detainees from improvements to the ventilation system in Bulacan Provincial Jail
 - 1,026 detainees from the installation of a centrifugal water pump and the construction of bunk beds in Davao City Jail
- ▶ 25,225 detainees received essential household items

WOUNDED AND SICK

Armed clashes and other violent incidents often occurred in remote areas where the population had very limited access to health care. Expertise in war surgery and burn management was mainly only available in urban centres and victims rarely had the financial means to make the journey. In Mindanao, the ICRC assessed the medical needs of weapon-wounded people, mobilized and coordinated with the health authorities and relevant organizations, and provided first-aid training to health workers and direct assistance to conflict victims, including the weapon-wounded and amputees, where necessary. Essential drugs, vaccines, medical materials and supplies were pre-positioned in selected Philippine Red Cross chapters and hospitals.

- ▶ 300 people attended the 17th Asia-Pacific Military Medicine Conference, where the ICRC gave a presentation on its activities
- ▶ 181 weapon-wounded patients received medical care thanks to ICRC support for their transport and treatment costs
- ▶ 37 amputees received physical rehabilitation and prosthetic support (including the provision of 30 prostheses, 91 orthopaedic assistive devices and 2 wheelchairs)
- ▶ some 300 health professionals (civilian and military) attended 2 war-surgery seminars
- ▶ a staff member of the Davao Jubilee Centre sponsored to attend a three-year training course at the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics

AUTHORITIES

The authorities and the ICRC discussed the ratification of Additional Protocol I and a potential national law on IHL implementation. The Office of the Executive Secretary and the Supreme Court Chief Justice expressed their willingness to address the shortcomings of the criminal justice system mentioned in the ICRC's summary detention report (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

The Philippine Red Cross-led national IHL committee received ICRC support, including sponsoring the participation of committee members in the Second Universal Meeting of National IHL Committees held in Geneva, Switzerland, during which participants shared best practices and exchanged their experiences of national IHL implementation. At the committee's request, the ICRC began researching the compatibility of IHL and the new anti-terrorism law.

The House of Representatives gave the ICRC the opportunity to share its expertise during a round-table on small arms and light weapons and the proposed arms-trade treaty.

During the Philippine chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ICRC lent its expertise to ASEAN members during their discussions on the new charter. IHL principles were included in the charter adopted at the end of the year.

Government representatives attended the regional symposium in China commemorating the 30th anniversary of the 1977 Additional Protocols (see *Beijing regional*).

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Dialogue with the armed forces and insurgent groups regarding their obligations under IHL continued. Field dissemination sessions aimed to remind members of the armed forces, the police and armed groups of the need to respect civilians and to ensure the security of humanitarian workers.

The following groups participated in IHL dissemination sessions in the field and at their headquarters:

- 3,819 officers and soldiers from the armed forces
- 112 members of a paramilitary group in Mindanao
- 87 officers about to be deployed with UN peacekeeping forces
- 521 police officers in Calabarzon, Mindoro and Mindanao
- 2 senior police officers during an event on law enforcement in peacekeeping operations, held in Melbourne, Australia
- 30 senior police officers participating in a forum on IHL and international human rights law organized by the ICRC and the newly created Police Human Rights Affairs Office
- fighters from the MNLF, the MILF and the NPA

In parallel, military authorities worked to integrate IHL into their training and operations, with the ICRC's support. Some 300 IHL teaching kits were produced for the armed forces with the ICRC's financial support. The armed forces established a human rights office in January to help with the process of integrating IHL into their training.

- 37 military officers participated in IHL train-the-trainer courses
- 47 military officers completed an IHL workshop at the Western Mindanao Command

- 2 officers from the armed forces participated in the regional training seminar on peace-support operations, held in Malaysia (see *Kuala Lumpur regional*)
- some 130 officers from countries in the region participated in the staff exercise, with the ICRC's input, which took place before the multinational Balikatan exercise

CIVIL SOCIETY

Extensive communication in the field continued, aimed at raising awareness of the ICRC's mandate and activities, including dissemination to influential religious leaders.

- 454 college and university students and teachers attended 4 IHL sessions organized by the ICRC in Mindanao
- 50 lawyers based in Mindanao studied IHL
- law students and lecturers sponsored to attend national and international IHL events and competitions
- members of the Philippine Association of Law Schools attended a presentation on the ICRC's activities

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Philippine Red Cross was a key operational partner for the ICRC, and cooperation between the two organizations enhanced the ICRC's proximity to conflict-affected people (see *Civilians*).

The National Society's Disaster Management Services and the ICRC worked on projects such as the development of appropriate assessment forms for natural disaster and conflict situations and safer access to victims for National Society staff. The ICRC also supported conflict-preparedness training for Philippine Red Cross chapters in conflict-affected areas, enhancing their capacities through field exercises and case studies.

The National Society's capacity to respond to emergencies was reinforced through the donation of 10 water and sanitation kits and emergency-response training, focusing on the assessment of water supplies during emergencies. The training facilitated use of the water equipment following the damage caused by typhoon Lando in northern Mindanao, benefiting some 9,000 IDPs in evacuation centres.

The Philippine Red Cross also facilitated family visits for detainees and carried out IHL dissemination to local government officials and health workers.

The ICRC's cooperation with the National Society included participating in a series of "IHL on the Air" radio broadcasts and co-organizing events to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1977 Additional Protocols.

Coordination with Movement partners present in the Philippines took place on a regular basis.

- 25 Philippine Red Cross emergency-response and 50 technical staff participated in water and sanitation training sessions held jointly by the ICRC, the International Federation, the Spanish Red Cross and the German Red Cross
- staff of the National Society participated in a training session organized by the ICRC and the International Federation on assessing economic security needs in conflict-affected areas