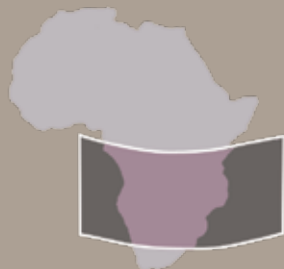




ICRC



Newsletter of the ICRC
Pretoria Regional
Delegation

LOOK OUT FOR...

Cluster munitions: A new treaty to end decades of civilians suffering

Cluster munitions have been a persistent problem for decades. These weapons have killed or injured tens of thousands of civilians in war-affected countries. The Convention on Cluster Munitions enters into force on 1 August 2010. It prohibits the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of such munitions. It also requires States Parties to destroy their stockpiles, clear remnants and assist victims. This brochure provides an overview of the cluster munitions problem, the main provisions of the Convention and the steps required to meet its commitments. Order online on icrc.org (ref. 0938)

Internal displacement in armed conflict: facing up to the challenges

Internal displacement, affecting tens of millions of people, is one of the most tragic consequences of armed conflict and other violence. This ICRC report highlights the reasons people are forced to flee, the risks they face and how they cope. Order online on icrc.org (ref. 4014)

MISSION Statement

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Themba

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SECOND QUARTER



Historic documents & artwork handed over to Robben Island Museum

The ICRC handed over historic documents concerning its visits to Apartheid-era detainees to the Robben Island Museum. The documents date from 1963 and 1964. More recent files remain classified.

"We hope that these documents not only enrich the museum's collection but will also facilitate and enhance historical research," said Catherine Gendre, the outgoing head of the ICRC delegation in Pretoria. "They concern the earliest years of the detainee-welfare activities carried out by the ICRC on the island."

The ICRC also offered the museum an artwork from Anna Mueller (see interview and photo).

A representative of the Robben Island Museum

Council accepted the historic documents and the artwork at a special ceremony on 13 May at Jetty One, in Cape Town's harbour, the pier from which detainees were taken by boat to Robben Island.

The ICRC has a long tradition of working together with memorial institutions and historical research centres. This is the first time the Robben Island Museum has been given public records from the ICRC archives.

The ICRC started visiting political detainees on Robben Island, a maximum security prison, in 1963. Until 1991, it visited thousands of prisoners all over South Africa and gave their families food vouchers and travel tickets so that they could visit them.



Mrs Anna Mueller explaining her artwork/painting to the audience during the handover at Robben Island Museum

In January 2007, as I arrived in Pretoria, the ICRC regional delegation was covering three countries of Southern Africa (Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa) as well as the islands of the Indian Ocean. Currently, the delegation of Pretoria is covering five countries (Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland). We are working in close collaboration with the regional delegation of Harare (Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).

During three and a half years in office, the region has been through electoral processes that went off quite well and yet some outbreaks of violence (in 2008 in Comoros and South Africa and in 2010 in Angola's Cabinda province) were of concern to the ICRC and its partners from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The regional delegation of Pretoria has been able to face these challenges with its limited set up and privileged, in the case of South Africa, partnership with the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS).

Besides these emergencies, the ICRC in Pretoria did pursue with its humanitarian diplomacy, the promotion and integration of humanitarian law, the presentation of the ICRC mandate and action as well as its cooperation with and support to national Red Cross societies in the region. In 2008, the arrival of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Johannesburg completed the picture of the Movement, which is important in Southern Africa.

On a more personal note, my mission was fully satisfying; I will always keep a very good memory of Southern Africa and especially of this month dedicated to the Soccer World Cup. I would particularly like to thank my colleagues within the ICRC delegation for their unwavering support during the three and a half years and all the interlocutors that I met during my mission, being governmental, from the Movement, members of international organisations or from civil society.

In this message, I would also like to pay tribute to Pierre Brocher, our 2007 deceased administrator and a friend of a long-standing.

All the best to all of you!

Finally, welcome to my replacement, Mr Gherardo Pontrandolfi, who – after a mission as ICRC head of delegation in Eritrea- will enjoy this unique and captivating region.

Catherine Gendre



Incoming Head of Regional Delegation, Mr. Gherardo Pontrandolfi with outgoing Head, Ms. Catherine Gendre.

ICRC documents enrich collection of Robben Island Museum

Lekgetho James Makola, acting senior manager at the museum considers the reports an invaluable resource for research. In an interview he explains why.

What value do the three reports of the first ICRC visits to Robben Island in 1963 and 1964 represent for the museum? Robben Island Museum places a high value on the reports and appreciates the ICRC's gesture in making this donation. The reports will add a new dimension to the museum's collections. Currently the materials on imprisonment in the Historical Papers Collection include documents from the Robben Island Sports and Recreation Committee as well as letters, study materials, notebooks and similar items of political prisoners. In addition, there are some items on the role of lawyers who handled the affairs of prisoners during their incarceration.

Adding material from a third party will definitely enrich our collections. The ICRC reports will be an invaluable resource for research on Robben Island during the Apartheid era.

The museum looks forward to the release of later reports, which should make it possible to draw further links between ICRC documents about the donation to the prisoners of recreational materials such as music records that now form part of the Audio Collection.

You have no doubt received comments from former detainees on the museum's importance for them and their families. Could you share a few with us?

Former political prisoners often refer to the role of the ICRC. They give credit to the Red Cross for its part in the struggle for improved conditions. In the words of Philemon Tefu (imprisoned on Robben Island from 1963 to 1985), "Improvements came markedly in 1974 when the Red Cross representatives were allowed to get into the prison unescorted by the warders."

Younger delegates representing the ICRC in the 1970s are often mentioned, Dominique Dufour in particular. Jackson Fuzile (incarcerated on the island from 1965 to 1977) said that "young fellows came, fellows who were very bright sparks. One of them was Dufour and the other I can't remember – two French guys but all from Switzerland. You felt the day you spoke to them that these people knew what prison was about, and they knew what their work was about: to make prison less harsh."

South Africa's deputy president, Kgalema Motlanthe (imprisoned on the island from 1977 to 1985), describes his own role along with that of the ICRC: "I served on the prison Red Cross Committee, which was a committee that liaised with the International Committee of the Red Cross and dealt with general grievances and problems of the prison population, ranging from organization of sports and cultural activities, to problems [like] the quality of food."

Velaphi Masuku (held at Robben Island from 1977 to 1987) mentioned how important family visits funded by the ICRC were, especially at a time when few prisoners had visits.

Question to painter Anna Mueller

Anna Mueller was born in Italy in 1960 and grew up in Switzerland. She trained as an interior designer, but since 1994 has been active as an artist, mainly abroad.

To create this painting, what inspired you?

I was very honoured to create this work. It was not the first time that I worked for the ICRC: I participated to an exhibition of paintings and photos organised by the ICRC at the prison of the Constitution Hill in Johannesburg, 2009. More than once, I visited that prison, where I spent many hours: I saw the walls, I saw the signs and I asked many questions. I thought of doing a painting in which I would combine together something meaningful for the Red Cross and about the prisoners during the Apartheid Segregation.

At the ICRC Headquarters in Geneva, I asked them for a sack (NB: a cloth printed with the emblem of the ICRC) used to transport mail. The mail service for family news was one of the ICRC delegates' main activities for the prisoners during the Apartheid era.

At the time, I knew that at Robben Island most of the prisoners were breaking stones in the Island's quarry mines. I used grains of marble that I mixed with the "tempera" technique, a technique based of eggs, water, linseed oil and turpentine that I use on large sized canvases.

I used these grains of marble to recapture a little the theme of the political prisoners' forced labour.

I had also to evoke the walls of the prison. I also made a research on the prisoner's names. Obviously, everybody is not in the painting, I took some names at random, I aged the paper because the detention at Robben Island was something recent, but still from the past.

I wanted to represent the prison numbers attributed to them. For a personal reason, I perceive the numbers badly: my father was Jewish and endured persecution, thus, I wanted to mark that.

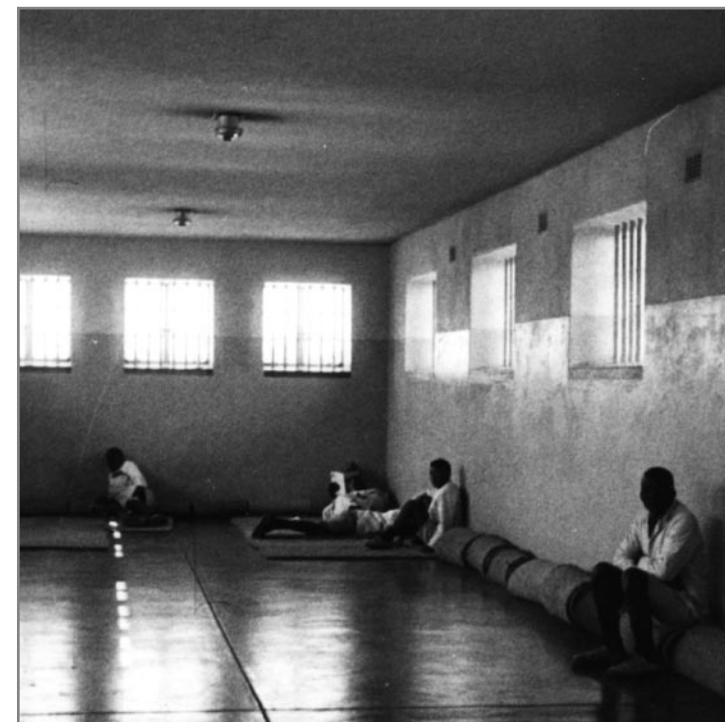
Of course, the prisoners, like in all prisons, are making signs on the walls; signs are very important, signs that indicate the days that go by. For me, it is very important to recall those signs because the time spent in the prison is very long. This time can be utilised properly, if you have the moral and intellect strength as was the case for many among the prisoners at Robben

Island – as in all prisons, for that matter – but you can also fall into a heavy depression, so it is very important to depict the notion of time.

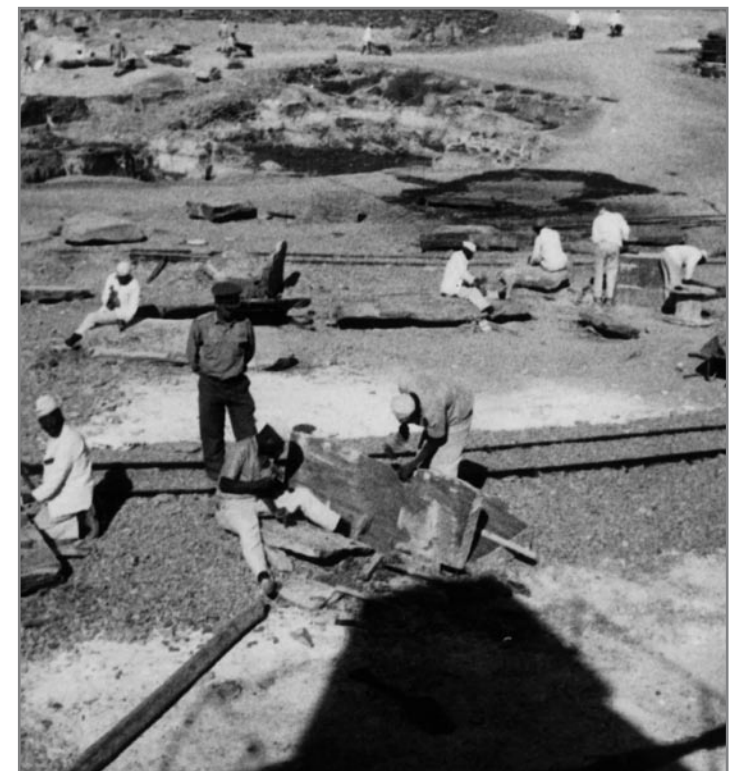
Finally, the prisoners' photos - it was a very difficult choice for me because you cannot include everybody and it is like drawing small cards at random.

This is the story of how this painting came to life; I did it at Dakar (Senegal) in 2009.

Titled The Memory, something to never forget.



1967. A communal cell, Robben Island Maximum Security Prison, General Sections. The intervention of the ICRC assisted in the formation of the Matyeni Football Association on Robben Island during 1967. © Photothèque CICR (DR)/1967



1967. Prisoners at work in the Bluestone Quarry on Robben Island. © Photothèque CICR (DR)/1967



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*THEMBA is the Zulu & Xhosa word for "Hope"



First aid instructors on safer access training

In May, the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) offered a three-day training on Safer Access to eleven of its first aid instructors from different provinces. This training aimed at empowering the instructors with more knowledge and skills in aligning issues of first aid and to safely and actively access the people in need of urgent help.

It encouraged the instructors to increase the number of volunteers and better coordinate their activities to improve impact on the ground.

"The overriding factor in the selection of Safer Access

instructors is our ability to understand the specific needs of the humanitarian and development sector in any given context. We strive to keep up to date with changes in aid delivery and operating environments to ensure we are field-relevant and we work in accordance with key humanitarian principles" said Mbuso Mthembu, SARCS Disaster Management Officer.

The training was funded and supported by the ICRC as part of its cooperation programmes to strengthen local capacities to respond to crises. It builds on earlier support to SARCS at the time of the 2009 national elections and the outbreaks of urban violence in 2008.

Experts gathered to discuss displacement and cluster munitions

The ICRC and South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) hosted the 10th annual regional seminar on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) from 4-7 May in Pretoria. Deputy Minister Ebrahim Ebrahim officially opened the seminar together with Catherine Gendre, head of the ICRC's regional delegation in Pretoria. In his opening speech, Deputy Minister Ebrahim said that "DIRCO is co-hosting this seminar because its theme resonates with our country's foreign policy, which includes the promotion of development, and the contribution to the resolution of conflict on the African continent".

This year's seminar provided an overview of two combined themes that are institutional priorities for the ICRC: the Convention on Cluster Munitions Convention (CCM) and the African Union Conventions for the Protection and Assistance of Internally

Displaced Persons in Africa. The seminar gave an overview of the latest developments in IHL and focused on the current state of implementation of IHL in the region. It also dealt with topical issues such as IHL and Private Military and Security Companies, the integration of IHL into the armed forces, and developments towards an Arms Trade Treaty.

The seminar brought together 32 government representatives from fifteen states in the region (including all SADC members): Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All participants work in IHL in their countries. They discussed the provisions and implementation requirements of various treaties and reviewed progress made in ratifying and implementing them in their own countries.



2010. Participants to the 10th annual regional seminar on International Humanitarian Law