

## THE BEST ARTICLE ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

Panel Discussion on

"MEDIA REPORTING ON THE FATE OF VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE"

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Daliyet Singh/ICRC

## NEWSLETTER

ICRC - WINTER 2012

## MEDIA: A POWERFUL PARTNER

## A FORCE MULTIPLIER OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS



Usually the first to get a story out, media persons serve as witnesses to a situation as it unfolds on the ground. They are the ones who shed light on the reality of a conflict or the suffering of vulnerable people. As a consequence, the media is also usually the first to report on underlying trends that would influence the future of humanitarian action.

Reports by journalists, at times, allow external actors such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to shape a humanitarian response as diverse actors might overtly or covertly use assorted methods and means to constrain the intervention capacity of humanitarian workers, even preventing them from reaching the spot. Such obstructive powers often demonstrate deep contemporary challenges and risks in the humanitarian sector.

The ICRC considers the media as a powerful partner, a force multiplier of humanitarian affairs. However, with power comes responsibility. Journalists have a moral duty to draw the attention of their audiences - citizens, governments, leaders and others - to the plight of victims of a forgotten conflict and to those situations of armed violence where the rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are often ignored.

Journalists need to bring awareness to war crimes or crimes against humanity whenever they happen.

The media makes a relevant contribution to humanitarian action especially keeping in mind the role they play, often at their own peril and risk, going beyond the call of duty to report from sensitive situations around the world.

Both with the development of technology and the abundance of social media sites, communication, more than ever today, has come to play a crucial role in the decision-making process of our societies and organisations. What can organisations like the ICRC do to help media persons in a situation where the media landscape is changing even more rapidly than the nature of warfare?

The ICRC's hotline for journalists - available on the website - along with training in safety, First Aid and IHL, which it has been conducting worldwide, sometimes with the support of National Societies or recognised media organisations, may prove to be of some assistance and encouragement.

The ICRC's own experience of 150 years of working in the battlefields or other emergency situations makes us believe that both the media and humanitarian

organisations are interdependent and share similar challenges and risk on the frontlines making it imperative to learn from each other's experiences.

Media reports often contribute to the shaping of research and the ability to tackle the existing or future crisis for organisations such as the ICRC. The information gathered from various media outlets not only keeps one informed about the political, social and cultural environment but also contributes to critical decisions on future humanitarian action.

The ICRC recognises the media's work on humanitarian issues by conducting competitions and instituting awards for journalists and photographers reporting on armed conflict with the hope that it will contribute towards changing social attitudes and refining interventions. Just as Napoleon Bonaparte famously said, ICRC too is of the firm belief "...that three newspapers would continue to be more powerful than one hundred thousand bayonets."

**Mary Wernitz**Head of the Regional Delegation  
New Delhi

ICRC

## THE JOURNEY OF A BLANKET FROM INDIA TO SYRIA

**US \$2.6 million worth of Indian manufactured relief goods reaching Syrian victims**

Kailash Nath, the proprietor of Baldev Woollen Mills in Panipat, Haryana, one of the largest blanket manufacturing units in India, learnt his humanitarian lesson during the 2005 earthquake watching televised images of thousands of shivering homeless women and children, in Pakistan, sleeping in the open on the rubble of their destroyed houses.

This factory owner's journey through his blankets from India to the earthquake victims in Pakistan is a rare, intimate portrayal of the decision made years later by Kailash Nath and his family to work, as much as possible, for similar victims around the world.

Forty six-year-old Kailash Nath says his "heart weeps" when he witnesses the same images from Syria or Libya on television news where again thousands of homeless are living in camps. To drive the point home he says "just spend a few hours in the open on a cold night without a blanket or heating...when you go numb and thoughtless only then will you really understand their needs."

Around 150 employees work in his blanket factory, where manufacturing takes place round-the-clock. Hundreds of thousands of needy in Syria, Azerbaijan as well as in several African countries receive these blankets distributed through various humanitarian organisations including the ICRC.

"In the last three months we have transported a consignment of 208,000 blankets - both woollen and synthetic - through Jordan, to Syria and 245,000 to Azerbaijan through the ICRC," adds Kailash Nath.

Taking a huge risk Kailash Nath started his blanket business around 25 years ago least realising that one day he would be supplying such a huge quantity of blankets to those most in need.

It is while supplying blankets to the Pakistan earthquake victims in 2005 that he shifted course from being just a businessman to a humanitarian worker as well. He had then supplied 350,000

blankets to the Government of India and other organisations "without earning profits out of it".

It is since then, claims Kailash Nath, that he hardly makes an earning out of his product when supplied for a humanitarian cause. His nephew, Rajesh Kumar on a lighter note adds, "we can earn money from happy markets and happy times rather than from a sad market."

Rajesh, who at the age of twenty eight heads the operations in the factory says, "our blankets are always in demand from different international organisations such as the UN and the ICRC for dealing with emergency situations across the globe or stock them during peacetime."

This is a factory that also follows strict norms of social responsibility and takes good care of its workers and labourers. Rajesh says, "thanks to the ICRC, with their guidance to upgrade social compliance standards it is a priority for us to maintain the best employee-friendly setting in the factory so that our workers feel at home and enjoy work."

Facilities for food, drinking water, toilets, recreation and special arrangements for personnel protection equipment are provided to the employees of the factory, as Rajesh quips "charity begins at home!" Our employees are our eyes and ears and we need to take care of them first and then the rest of the world."

The actual manufacturing process of blankets here again is quite unique. Nearly all woollen blankets (not synthetic) are produced from used woollen material, collected from across the globe, such as used and rejected sweaters, overcoats, blankets and other woollen products. They are first cleaned, sanitized, sorted and recycled into yarn. This recycled yarn is then used for the new blankets according to the specifications given by their customers.

Once these blankets are ready, they are collected into bundles of 20 and properly packed in woven fabric. Environment-

friendly factory owners also do not use individual polythene bags for packing.

These bundles are then loaded into containers that are transported from their factory through trucks to Delhi's Tughlakabad dry port. From Tughlakabad they travel by train on a three-day journey to Mumbai's sea port where the containers are loaded into cargo ships for onward shipment to the various destinations. The whole process of transportation takes at least a month's time.

"For Syria, the ICRC has purchased around 400,000 blankets and 67,000 buckets so far this year and more will continue" said Marie Otaegui, ICRC's Corporate Purchaser based in New Delhi.

"In the past three months, the ICRC procured 2.6 million USD (13.5 crore INR) worth of relief blankets and plastic buckets for storing potable water from India for Syrian victims," says Marie Otaegui who regularly visits these factories to assess whether they are up to the mark in maintaining ICRC's quality requirements and standards of social responsibility in their outlets.

Finally the ICRC, Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers on ground receive and distribute these blankets to those in need in the camps, homes and other places as and when required through a well-managed distribution process.



A beneficiary shakes hands with an ICRC staff during the distribution of relief material by the ICRC and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent



## REPORTING FROM THE FRONTLINE

Since 2005, the ICRC and the Press Institute of India (PII) have been supporting journalists for their contribution to humanitarian reporting. This year, four Indian print journalists were given the PII-ICRC award for their reporting on human struggle during and after conflict.

Siva and his family's plight resonated that of millions caught in the cross-fire in Sri Lanka during the war in 2009. Their struggle to restore their lives and dignity long after the war found voice in Rohini Mohan's article featured in the Caravan Magazine. Fearing for Siva and his family's life and her own access to the victims, Rohini penned the story as an anonymous writer. She believes it is as important to tell the story as it is to be safe and have continued access to the victims.

"War is hard, peace is harder. As cameras leave the place and armies move out, a lot of things unfold. It is important to understand how life unfolds when nobody is watching", says Rohini, an independent journalist with nearly ten years of reporting behind her.

The other awardees were Ramachandra Patil (The Week), Soma Basu (The Statesman) and Supriya Sharma (The Times of India) who reported on the humanitarian situation from Iraq, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh.

For Supriya Sharma, the joint third prize winner and an Oxford fellow, it is about attracting the decision-makers to the impact of conflict, which she fears is often reduced to headcounts.

Some of these areas where conflict takes place are very remote and people in the urban areas have no idea what is going on. When you place a name to it, people are able to relate to it, Supriya explains.

From Batticaloa to Baghdad, the consequences of conflict are compounded by the obstructions to humanitarian aid. Ramachandra Patil's Iraq Chronicles, that won him the second prize, tell us about daily struggles of an average Iraqi in the war-torn land.

"I was there (Iraq) for a month and every five kilometres there was a checkpoint, no health facilities, no electricity. International organisations are doing good work but much more needs to be done there, appeals Ramachandra, who also attended the ICRC's training for journalists on conflict reporting.

The award was adjudicated by a distinguished panel of senior journalists and lawyers who were looking for much more than just words in the articles. Jury member and senior journalist Amitabh Chaudhary says neutrality of the report and language and its possible impact on the humanitarian situation were the key elements.

## ICRC HOTLINE FOR JOURNALISTS



The ICRC has set up mechanisms like the 'ICRC Hotline for Journalists' that allow the organisation to take prompt action when journalists are arrested,

captured or detained. In August 2011, the ICRC acted as a neutral intermediary and safely evacuated 33 foreign journalists trapped in a Tripoli hotel in Libya. The ICRC also conducts training programmes for journalists on conflict and humanitarian reporting.

Principles of neutrality, impartiality and their commitment to the people caught in conflict situations bind the ICRC and journalists together. In recognition of this unique relationship, the ICRC's Head of Regional Delegation in New Delhi, Ms Mary Wernitz, pledged her commitment to the PII-ICRC awards honouring reporters who risk their lives to tell stories of human suffering.



Winners of the competition from left to right : Rohini Mohan (The Caravan) – 1st Prize, Soma Basu (The Statesman) - Joint 3rd prize, Ramachandra Reddy Patil (The Week Magazine) – 2nd Prize and Supriya Sharma (The Times of India) – Joint 3rd Prize. The Regional Delegation in New Delhi along with PII hosted the competition for the best article in the printed media for the fifth consecutive year

## FACTOIDS

For the ICRC twitter has proved to be a powerful tool in not only gathering information but also for disseminating information. The ICRC has been circulating relevant and useful information from the ground during several recent emergencies, especially from field operations in Libya and Syria.

You too can follow us on twitter @icrc.org and facebook <http://www.facebook.com/icrc>

Follow on and

## COMPASSION IN THE MIDST OF COMBAT CAN WIN HEARTS AND MINDS

*There is a language that doesn't need words – that of basic human values," believes Indian army Lt Col D P K Pillay who narrates his first-hand experience in the field and believes that if you follow principles of IHL in a gun battle, even your enemies will respect you.*

**Would you briefly narrate the incident of 25th January 1994?**

This incident relates to a period when very violent ethnic clashes were frequently taking place between Naga and Kuki tribes in the state of Manipur. My platoon was tasked to search, locate and neutralise some militants who were responsible for burning some villages and people alive. During this operation when I entered a suspected hideout the militants inside opened fire and the first burst of bullets hit my right forearm and shoulder. The second burst hit me on my chest on the right side and immediately after that shrapnel from a hand grenade blew up a large portion of my right foot. The fire fight in the village went on for almost one hour before the remaining militants surrendered. We then saw two young children were also wounded with a gun shot in the thigh and one in the abdomen.

**Yourself grievously wounded, what made you ask the military chopper to evacuate the two children first?**

The nearest civilian hospital for the children was at Tamenglong District which was six hours on foot. I realized the children couldn't survive the trek and therefore requested the pilot to evacuate them to the District hospital where my Battalion was. The pilot spoke to my Commanding Officer, Col V Nautiyal, who also asked him to

evacuate the children first as per my wishes. A woman from the group of onlookers fell at my feet to thank me. She was the mother of the girl. There is a language that doesn't need words – that of basic human values.

We knew what were we there for. The militants knew what were they fighting for. What was the fault of the young children? There is the soldier's honour code in following the norms of Humanitarian Law to care for the sick and wounded especially children. We all are taught IHL and the Geneva Conventions as Cadets in the NDA (National Defence Academy) and IMA (Indian Military Academy) and then as officers in various courses of instruction. I read it with all the more interest because I share my birthday with the date of the Geneva Conventions, i.e., 12th August.

**Following this experience what message would you like to convey to your colleagues and troops of the Indian Army?**

The recurring message of our civilization is that of non violence and compassion. Ours

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COMBATANTS



These booklets are pocket-sized so that combatants can carry them along and consult the rules on the spot, thus enabling them to act advisedly and to avoid making mistakes which might have very serious consequence.

is a democratic country where even the weakest and poorest should have a right to live and that too happily. Our Army derives its strength from our civilizational values and democratic character. The message from the incident is that compassion in the midst of combat can really win hearts and minds of locals. This may pay greater peace dividends than all the weapons and soldiers in the world.

Secondly, the use of force should be the minimum required for achieving the legitimate mission. We soldiers at all levels should be aware of the Geneva Conventions, basic norms of IHL and code of conduct by soldiers in combat as dictated by the Soldiers Ten Commandments for CI (counter insurgency) operations.



Lt Col DPK Pillay flanked by Dingamang (left) and Guimui (right), the children injured in the encounter and their mother, Masebiliu

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NEW HEAD OF THE REGIONAL DELEGATION IN NEW DELHI

Ms. Mary Werntz took charge as the Head of Regional Delegation of the ICRC in New Delhi in August 2012. Her previous posting was as Head of the Regional Delegation for North America and Canada in Washington DC between 2008 and 2012. She began her career with the ICRC almost 17 years back in 1996 with her very first mission in Jammu and Kashmir as an Urdu interpreter carrying out ICRC's first detention visits. This experience was followed by missions to Croatia and Georgia. After serving as Deputy Head of Region for Eastern Europe she also headed the delegations in Azerbaijan and Nepal.

# REUNION

## RECOVERY OF HOPE- INDIAN RED CROSS BRIDGES DISTANCE

After a hard day's work, when everybody got into bed for a peaceful sleep Nithya Sadasivam kept awake worrying about the fate of her lost family. She had no contact, no information and no clue on the fate of her husband and daughter since they were separated during the civil strife in Sri Lanka in 2006. Left with just her two other children, it was difficult for her to spend her life without knowing about the rest of her family.

All Nithya now had was a fading recollection of memories - of meals eaten together and the colour of the dress her daughter wore when she last saw her. In June 2011, Nithya registered a tracing request for Mr Suresh Sadasivam and Ms Lavani Sadasivam at the Indian Red Cross Society's (IRCS), Tamil Nadu State Branch.

Additional information which could help to trace them was collected by the branch staff. Nithya informed the IRCS team that there was a possibility that her missing husband and daughter may have moved to the Netherlands.

Residing in a refugee camp in Chennai with her other two children the search for her husband

and daughter was a lonely and painful battle for Nithya. The only time loneliness made space for any other emotion in her sunken eyes, was the time when she tried to draw a picture of her grown up daughter in her mind. For a woman whose mind has been seared with troubling thoughts, the Red Cross seemed like a new friend.

Finally the Red Cross team in July 2011 was able to trace someone called "Suresh Mathu", who resembled the missing person's photo. Without any further delay the team contacted him through an email, also giving him details about the whereabouts of his wife.

This information was also provided to Nithya in Chennai. The search had ended; the endless wait was over and the missing person was found. On the same day at 10.33 am through the Red Cross phone the team along with Nithya called her husband in the Netherlands. The call was answered by their daughter who was eleven years old by then.

Nithya was talking to her daughter after six long years. In a conversation punctuated with tears of joy and affection, a waiting

mother had a lot to say to her lost child even as word refused to come forth. Later, Suresh Sadasivam was again contacted in the Netherlands through the Red Cross phone. Family links were re-established. Both were overwhelmed with emotions on being reunited by the Indian Red Cross after six long years of separation.

*Courtesy: FNS-IRCS, Tamil Nadu*

## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FAMILY MEMBER?



**ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A FAMILY MEMBER?**

**familylinks.icrc.org**  
**CAN HELP YOU**



This leaflet highlights the familylinks website, intended for people who have been separated from their family members due to armed conflict, natural disasters or migration. It explains how to contact specialists of the Red Cross and Red Crescent around the world. The website provides access to a range of services that are designed to help people restore contact with their loved ones.



Nithya with her family after being reunified with the help of the FNS-IRCS, Tamil Nadu

## FACTOIDS

### THE HUMAN TOUCH THAT A SIMPLE ONLINE WEBSITE FAMILYLINKS.ICRC.ORG CAN PROVIDE.

In 2011, the ICRC and National Societies delivered approximately 127,000 Red Cross messages and facilitated close to 220,000 phone calls between separated relatives; we also helped reunite around 1,500 people – mainly youth and former child soldiers – with their families.



# PREPARING TO RESPOND

## THROUGH EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING – A RED CROSS CHHATTISGARH BRANCH INITIATIVE

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Chhattisgarh branch conducted a six-day emergency response team (ERT) training for the Red Cross volunteers from 23-28 July, 2012 in the state capital of Raipur. The training was attended by 31 volunteers from seven districts, viz., Bijapur, Bastar, Dantewada, Durg, Kanker, Kondagaon and Raipur. Dr. T.N. Mehrotra, Vice Chairman of the IRCS Chhattisgarh branch inaugurated the training.

The ERT training aimed to prepare volunteers for better response in times of emergency by enhancing their knowledge and skills. The specific objectives of the training were, to formalize a new regional level ERT, to strengthen the response capacity of the Red Cross State Branch, to create a pool of trained volunteers for effective emergency response and to enhance the understanding of the volunteers about the Red Cross movement and different aspects of emergencies. The programme was jointly organized



Chhattisgarh Red Cross volunteers participating in the emergency response team training in Raipur

by the IRCS Chhattisgarh branch and the ICRC. Suggestions for more such training programmes, including a refresher course,

to continuously upgrade and reinforce the knowledge and skill of the volunteers were made.

## PROTECTION OF DETAINEES

### Jammu and Kashmir

Since 1995, the ICRC delegation, following the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of India has been regularly visiting persons detained in relation to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

From July 2012 to the end of October 2012, the ICRC visited 142 detainees in six places of detention all over Jammu and Kashmir and in other states of India.

From January 2011 until the end of May 2012, ICRC delegates personally visited 775

detainees in 19 places of detention across Jammu and Kashmir as well as in other states of India.

### Restoring Family Links through Family News Service

The ICRC distributed one Red Cross Message (RCM) and collected 76 RCMs in Bhutan from July 2012 to the end of October 2012.

### Travel Documents

From July 2012 to October 2012, the ICRC issued travel documents enabling 108 persons to travel to third countries.

### Family Visits

From July 2012 to October 2012, the ICRC assisted relatives of 44 detainees in India and relatives of 15 detainees in Bhutan for family visits. From July 2012 to October 2012, the ICRC assisted relatives of 44 detainees in India and relatives of 15 detainees in Bhutan for family visits. From July 2012 to October 2012, the ICRC assisted relatives of 44 detainees in India and relatives of 15 detainees in Bhutan for family visits.



DETENTION	INDIA		RED CROSS MESSAGES (RCMs)	INDIA	
	India	Bhutan		India	Bhutan
No. of ICRC visits	6	2	RCMs collected	0	76
No. of detainees visited	142	68	RCMs distributed	0	1
No. of detention places visited	6	2	RCMs Back to Sender	0	0

1.07.2012 to 31.10.2012

# PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

## THE ICRC'S PHYSICAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN INDIA: TOWARDS A LIFE OF INDEPENDENCE AND DIGNITY

Watching the tears rolling down Nazir Ahmad's face was all that was needed for the Voluntary Medicare Society (VMS) to fathom the impact of the change they are making to lives. For the first time in ten years, since losing his leg in an accident, this student from Baramullah – a district in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) - felt a rush of independence with the artificial limb he had just been fitted with as he walked along the parallel bar unassisted. The ICRC has helped establish this centre with the latest gadgets so that they are able to produce good quality, low-cost prostheses, orthoses and assistive devices.

Disability is an important public health problem especially in developing countries such as India. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 15% of the world's population has some form of disability. A recent community-based study in India found the prevalence of all types of disability at 6.3% of the population out of which mental disability was found to be the most common type at 36.7%. In India, rather than landmine and bullet injuries, it is mostly road accidents or diseases such as diabetes and other vascular deficiencies that are the cause of amputations. Since one context differs from another rehabilitation measures also need to be targeted according to the needs of the disabled and with community participation. A majority of the disabled in India reside in rural areas where accessibility, availability, and utilization of rehabilitation services are the major issues to be considered. Moreover, accessibility to services for people directly or indirectly affected by conflict is limited due to the insufficient number of functional centres providing physical rehabilitation services.

Physical rehabilitation includes the provision of assistive devices such as prostheses, orthoses, walking-aids and

wheelchairs along with appropriate therapy allowing the optimal use of the device. Restoring mobility, is the first step towards enjoying basic rights such as access to food,



A beneficiary learning to walk with the help of the new artificial limb at the Physical Rehabilitation Reference Centre, Raipur

shelter, education, employment and, more generally, having the same opportunities as other members of society.

Since 2004, the ICRC in collaboration with the IRCS, J&K has been supporting the development of physical rehabilitation care at the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital in Jammu. As the Artificial Limb Centre (ALC), Jammu has built on its skills and expertise an exit strategy for the ICRC has been worked out with the GMC allowing for a smooth withdrawal by August 2013. In Srinagar, it is since 2005 that the ICRC started the development of physical rehabilitation care at the Bone & Joint Hospital as well as the training of qualified personnel. The ICRC has also been working in close collaboration with VMS, Srinagar since June 2012 to provide care to those in need.

In the northeast of the country, the District Disability Rehabilitation Centre (DDRC), Dimapur is the only service provider in the state of Nagaland carrying out rehabilitation services. The ICRC has been supporting it since the centre was inaugurated in 2010 on the 3rd of December, also World Disability Day. One of the beneficiaries of the centre, Khem Bahadur, who had a part of his left leg amputated due to a bone tumour, acknowledges that the prosthesis provided by this centre is much lighter and more comfortable than his previous one.

In Raipur, the Physical Reference Rehabilitation Referral Centre (PRRC) was set up by the Ministry of Justice Social Welfare and Empowerment (MJSWE), Chhattisgarh in collaboration with the ICRC and has been operational since March 2012. One of the beneficiaries of the centre, Moreshwar Sarwane, a resident of Raipur who today works as a security guard in a Ministry of the Chhattisgarh Government is a war veteran who lost part of his left leg to a bullet injury during the Kargil Conflict. He found his way to the PRRC in Raipur on the recommendation of another beneficiary and today with his artificial limb is able to carry on with his life with a greater sense of independence and dignity.

With its community-based approach in mind the ICRC along with the Panchayat and Social Welfare Department (SWD) and Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, India organised a physical rehabilitation seminar in Raipur, in March 2012. The seminar succeeded in bringing together diverse stakeholders from across India on a common platform for exchanges on physical rehabilitation challenges in the state. Even as this diverse gathering of practitioners assessed the possibilities of establishing a network approach, the seminar presented managers of the ICRC-supported centres from J&K, the Northeast and Chhattisgarh an opportunity to share their experiences as well. The effort was to bring the beneficiaries to the central point of any discussion and evolve strategies out of their needs and suggestions. Hence, the motto for the seminar – Nothing For Us, Without Us.

### FACTOIDS

In 2011, the ICRC supported 92 physical rehabilitation projects in 28 countries and provided physical rehabilitation services for more than 222,000 people; it also ran prosthetics and orthotics courses in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Sudan.

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## Libya: Workers from Bangladesh and India transported to Tarhuna

The ICRC staff transferred about 60 foreign workers, mainly from Bangladesh and India, to Tarhuna, where it set up a temporary base for its humanitarian operations. Since the start of the violence in Bani Walid, the ICRC has been working in the area, delivering surgical supplies to treat weapon-wounded patients, as well as other urgently needed medical supplies, to Bani Walid hospital and the Dahra polyclinic. The ICRC, together with the Libyan Red Crescent distributed aid to thousands of people who have fled their homes in Bani Walid. In its capacity as a strictly neutral and independent humanitarian organization, the ICRC calls on all those involved to respect the life, physical well-being and human dignity of others at all times. It urges everyone to respect and protect the injured, medical personnel, medical facilities and any vehicle used as an ambulance.



The Libyan Red Crescent distributing ICRC hygiene kits to sub-Saharan migrant workers stranded in a makeshift camp

## Syria: Urgent call on warring parties to respect civilians

The humanitarian situation in Syria is getting worse by the day and the needs of ordinary

people continue to increase. The ICRC remains alarmed by the manner in which the parties to the conflict in Syria are conducting hostilities. "Little regard is being paid to the plight of the population by the fighting parties," said ICRC director of operations Pierre Krähenbühl on the humanitarian situation in Syria. "As armed confrontations escalate, taking a heavy toll on civilians, we strongly urge all sides involved in the fighting to take immediate action to fully comply with international humanitarian law, otherwise known as the law of armed conflict," he added. These rules and principles apply to all parties to the armed conflict in Syria, and impose restrictions on the means and methods of warfare that they may use. The ICRC reiterates that under international humanitarian law attacks may be directed only against military objectives and not against civilians, or against civilian objects such as homes, schools, medical facilities and vehicles, community shelters or places of worship. International humanitarian law also stipulates protection for the civilian population and those not (or no longer) participating in hostilities, such as the sick, the wounded and those who have been detained, who must be treated with dignity at all times.

## ICRC in Afghanistan: Working in partnership with the Afghan Red Crescent Society

Afghanistan is the ICRC's biggest operation in terms of resources, with a budget of 89 million Swiss francs or INR 517 crores for 2012. The organization has more than 1,650 national staff and 140 expatriates based at its main delegation in Kabul and the five sub-delegations and eleven offices countrywide. In addition, it operates seven prosthetic/orthotic centres. The ICRC provides the Afghan Red Crescent Society with technical and financial assistance to help it deliver services to the community and to implement



Joint relief assistance undertaken by the ICRC and Afghan Red Crescent Society in Afghanistan

a range of programmes. Between January and September, with support from the ICRC, the Afghan Red Crescent Society distributed 359 tonnes of wheat, rice and beans to 4,945 families; distributed one-month's food rations and household items to 21,118 families displaced by conflict or natural disaster; distributed two-month-old chicks to 667 women in eastern and northern Afghanistan to help them support their families by raising chickens; distributed chicken feed and basic equipment such as water drinkers and feeders for their poultry; held training sessions for 680 livestock owners to help improve animal husbandry in the south and central regions; granted micro-credit loans to 1,366 households to help them improve the quality of their agriculture production and livestock.

## Myanmar: ICRC helps the sick, wounded and displaced in Rakhine State

Following the June 2012 outbreak of violence in Rakhine State, the ICRC set up a permanent presence in Sittwe. Together with the Myanmar Red Cross Society, the organization is providing basic but vital assistance to the sick, wounded and displaced, regardless of their origin. The ICRC and the Myanmar Red Cross are evacuating patients who cannot get to health facilities on their own and giving and supplying water in camps for displaced persons.

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