

# 150 YEARS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

**Come on a private guided tour of the exhibition *Humanizing War?*  
ICRC – 150 years of humanitarian action 30 April - 20 July, Rath Museum, Geneva**

As part of the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of its founding and of the original Geneva Convention, the ICRC, in partnership with the Musées d'art et d'histoire de Genève and the Mémorial de Caen, has organized an exhibition at the Rath Museum, a symbolic building for the ICRC as it housed the International Prisoner-of-War Agency during the First World War. It was from there that the ICRC organized the exchange of letters between prisoners of war and their families and the search for missing combatants.

The exhibition invites visitors to learn more about the ICRC and how the different aspects of its work developed, and to consider the nature of modern conflicts. Archives, various objects and audio-visual material take visitors on a journey to the heart of humanity at war and demonstrate the complexity of the issues to which the ICRC has had to respond over the past 150 years.

We are delighted to send you the first **newsletter of the Friends of the ICRC** and wish to express our gratitude for your support. We hope this newsletter will give you a better idea of the impact your generosity is having on hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world.

## YOUR CONTACT



**Sabrina Bordji-Michel**  
Philanthropy Manager  
Tel: +41 22 730 30 31  
email: sbordji@icrc.org



International Committee of the Red Cross - 19, avenue de la Paix - 1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
[www.icrc.org/eng/donations/friends](http://www.icrc.org/eng/donations/friends)

## REPLY CARD Complete and return to the ICRC

I'd like to go on a guided tour of the exhibition ***Humanizing War?***  
**ICRC – 150 years of humanitarian action**

Tuesday, 20 May at 6.30 p.m.  Thursday, 22 May at 6.30 p.m.

To arrange the tour, I prefer to be contacted:

- by post  
 by email

Ms  Mr

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

To attend the guided tour of the exhibition ***Humanizing War? ICRC - 150 years of humanitarian action***, return this reply card.

Cover picture: Didier Revol/ICRC



## FRIENDS OF THE ICRC AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE ICRC - NO. 1 - APRIL 2014

### RESTORING FAMILY LINKS – ONE OF THE ICRC'S FLAGSHIP ACTIVITIES



We can all imagine the anguish we'd feel if we suddenly lost contact with one of our loved ones and didn't know where they were or whether they were safe.

In times of armed conflict, natural disaster and migration, thousands of people are cut off from their families. Men and women are driven from their homes or captured; and in the confusion, children, the elderly, the injured and the disabled are separated from their relatives, not knowing where they are or how to contact them. They desperately need to find them or at least find out what's happened to them.

As early as 1870, the ICRC organized the exchange of letters between prisoners of war and their families, an activity that took on vast proportions during the two World Wars. Thousands of detained combatants and civilians around the world now benefit from these services. When families are split up by armed conflict, natural disaster or some other major upheaval such as mass migration, the ICRC does all it can to put them back in contact with each other, locate the missing and facilitate family reunification. In order to do this, it works closely with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world and, together with them, has formed the Family Links Network. The Network has a unique response capacity almost everywhere in the world.

Every year hundreds of thousands of families exchange Red Cross messages (brief, personal messages written on a special form) or communicate by technological means made available to them (mobile and satellite phone, internet conferencing, the website [familylinks.icrc.org](http://familylinks.icrc.org)).

The exhibition *Humanizing War? ICRC – 150 years of humanitarian action* has been organized to commemorate the founding of the ICRC in 1863. It will be held in Geneva's Rath Museum, the building that housed the International Prisoner-of-War Agency during the First World War. It was from there that the ICRC organized the exchange of letters between prisoners of war and their families and the search for missing combatants. This is a perfect opportunity to learn more about the history of the ICRC in a symbolic setting. More information about the exhibition can be found on the back of this Newsletter.

Thank you again for your interest and for your confidence in us.

**Christophe James Mehley**  
Deputy head  
Central Tracing Agency  
and Protection Division



ICRC



## YOUR GENEROSITY IN ACTION

### THE PHILIPPINES EMERGENCY

The ICRC has been working alongside the local Red Cross in the Philippines since 1982 to bring relief to civilians affected by fighting between armed groups and to improve detainees' living conditions and help them restore contact with their families. This meant that the ICRC was able to respond very quickly to the catastrophic Typhoon Haiyan, which struck on 8 November last year.

#### One of the most powerful typhoons ever recorded

Typhoon Haiyan devastated the eastern Philippines in a matter of hours. Over four months on, the tally is:

- 16 million people affected
- 4 million displaced
- 28,626 injured
- 1,785 missing
- 6,201 dead.

Most essential infrastructure was either destroyed or damaged, depriving survivors of health care, drinking water, electricity, transport, communications equipment and much else.

#### The ICRC's emergency action in the Philippines

The ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross quickly sent emergency teams to the most seriously affected areas, particularly eastern and western Samar. In the months since the typhoon struck, the ICRC has taken the following emergency action:

- **Aid and economic security**
  - distributed food rations, hygiene kits and other essential household items to 218,500 people;
  - helped restore the livelihoods of 3,000 families;
  - involved 2,000 family heads in "cash for work" projects.
- **Health**
  - set up an emergency hospital and two health-care units (one of them mobile);
  - provided two hospitals and 33 health-care centres still functioning with medicines and other medical supplies;
  - supported the rebuilding/repair of two hospitals and six rural health centres.

- **Water and habitat**
  - provided 70,000 people with drinking water;
  - provided technical assistance for the repair of water-supply networks serving more than 80,000 people;
  - helped 6,000 families rebuild their homes.
- **Detainees**
  - continued to provide water and food to detainees, who were also affected by Typhoon Haiyan;
  - made available telephone services and a website to facilitate renewed contact with their families.
- **Restoring family links**

**“ Every day ICRC staff report moving stories of relatives reunited with each other, like Inès and her mother Rosita.**

*Inès was overcome with anxiety when she heard that a typhoon had devastated the Philippines. She was thousands of kilometres from her mother Rosita, who lived on the particularly badly affected island of Leyte. She was desperate for news, contacted the Red Cross and decided to go to the Philippines to get involved in the search.*

*After four harrowing days, the Red Cross phoned to tell her that her mother was alive and there followed an emotional reunion. Inès decided to stay on in the Philippines as a Red Cross volunteer and help the many other people in distress.*

### RESTORING FAMILY LINKS IN THE PHILIPPINES

In the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, thousands of people in the Philippines and around the world suffered the anguish of being without news of their loved ones and not knowing if they were alive or dead. The ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross have been working together to help these families.

- In addition to setting its delegation to work, the ICRC sent an international team of specialists in restoring family links. They brought the equipment (satellite phones and other means of communication) needed to support the work of the Philippine Red Cross and the 30 members it had deployed in the affected provinces, especially Leyte, eastern Samar and Samar.
- More than 35,000 requests from anxious relatives were registered in the first 10 days alone.
- A special webpage was created where almost 1,000 people have been registered as missing and more than 3,000 others have confirmed that they are alive.
- More than 500 people have been reunited with their families.
- Lists of missing people have been posted in the affected regions and broadcast on local radio stations.
- Staff and volunteers are continuing their search for the missing by going to their last known address and contacting the various local authorities.

For a private visit to the exhibition *Humanizing War? ICRC - 150 years of humanitarian action* at the Rath Museum, see overleaf.



Nicht frankieren  
Ne pas affranchir  
Non affrancare

Geschäftsantwortsendung Invio commerciale-risposta  
Envoi commercial-réponse

International Committee of the Red Cross  
Sabrina Bordji-Michel  
Private Fundraising Division  
19, avenue de la Paix  
1202 Geneva,  
Switzerland