



NEWSLETTER

ICRC-IRCS : WE MOVE TOGETHER HAND IN HAND

EDITORIAL



"If we want to be at the forefront of tomorrow's humanitarian action, our Movement must not just allow change to happen — it must drive the change we know is coming," said Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), at the meeting of the Council of Delegates in Sydney in November 2013. The meet, which discussed global humanitarian challenges and the future of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, was attended by representatives of the ICRC, the Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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Each component of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has a specific area of expertise and works in close complementarity with the others to ensure that humanitarian challenges are met in a concrete and collaborative manner. When a situation so demands, in times of violence, disasters or other emergencies, for example the recent devastating Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines or the Syrian crisis, the Movement is able to mobilise its components and scale up its operations to respond rapidly.

This relationship of complementarity is reflected in the ICRC's partnership with the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), which has in its leadership Dr S.P. Agarwal as Secretary General. The ICRC has had a valuable association with the IRCS since the time it opened its offices in New Delhi in 1982, enabling a substantial outreach for each partner.

The current issue of the newsletter attempts to recognise this longstanding relationship between the two organisations through features on projects on which the IRCS and the ICRC are collaborating. It is a long journey that we together have pledged

to undertake. We remain committed and determined to nurture our partnership and build a stronger and more effective humanitarian response capacity.

The ICRC, along with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 189 National Societies, comprises the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the largest humanitarian network in the world. Born out of a response to conflict, the Red Cross has grown to encompass natural disasters as well as wider issues like healthcare and threats such as climate change. The Movement draws inspiration from the millions of volunteers around the world who serve humanity and individually and collectively help alleviate the suffering of people caught in the midst of humanitarian tragedies. It is because of their undying spirit and commitment that the Movement has been able to deliver humanitarian aid to countless people over the years.

Mary Werntz

Head of the Regional Delegation
New Delhi



ICRC

TIES THAT BIND: IRCS AND ICRC SERVE HUMANITY TOGETHER

For many years now, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been working in close cooperation with the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) to carry out a gamut of humanitarian activities across India, during both crisis and non-crisis situations. First Aid training for 14 IRCS districts in Pune, provision of non-food essentials after internal clashes along the Assam-Meghalaya border in India's northeast, restoring family links during the Bihar floods, Sikkim earthquake and the Uttarakhand disaster and support to Youth/Junior Red Cross Counselors in 22 schools in Odisha are just a few examples of ICRC-IRCS joint activities.

Every year, the IRCS and the ICRC jointly develop and agree on an annual plan of action, which is primarily implemented by selected IRCS state branches under the guidance of the IRCS National Headquarters with support from the ICRC. Talking about the significance of the partnership, Dr S.P. Agarwal, Secretary General of the IRCS, says, "The ICRC has a rich experience of 150 years, and because of our reach through volunteers across the country, there is great



Mr Yves Daccord, ICRC Director General (left), presents a memento on the 150th anniversary of the ICRC to Shri Gulam Nabi Azad, Honourable Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society (centre). Also in the frame is Dr S.P. Agarwal, Secretary General, IRCS

scope for us to work together. The IRCS has been working with the ICRC for many years, since way back in 1920, and there is a lot for

us to learn from the ICRC experience."

ICRC Director-General Mr Yves Daccord, who visited India in March 2013, held discussions with the IRCS leadership — Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, IRCS Chairman and Honourable Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, and Dr S.P. Agarwal — on issues of mutual cooperation, particularly on the commitment to strengthen joint response in case of emergencies in India.

The main objective of this cooperation is to enhance IRCS's capacity to respond effectively during humanitarian emergencies in the framework of the First Medical Responder (FMR) project and to promote timely Red Cross action in India. The primary areas of support are: provision of Family News Service (FNS), which connects family members separated in emergencies; first aid enhancement; strengthening of Youth/Junior Red Cross activities; promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL); emergency



The ICRC-organized meeting between Syed Wajid Ali Shah (right in cap), Chairman of the Red Cross in Pakistan and Colonel P. Bhatia, Assistant Secretary of the Indian Red Cross Society. Indo-Pak border, 1965



The Indian Red Cross Society and ICRC distribute relief material among the displaced people in the state of Assam-Meghalaya in 2011

response to victims of crises; and livelihood support for those in need.

The history of cooperation between the two institutions goes as far back as World

War II. They also worked together during the two India-Pakistan Wars. Ms Mary Werntz, Head of Regional Delegation, ICRC New Delhi, says, "Our partnership with the IRCS is an important part of our activities in

India. There are many instances in history in which the ICRC has provided humanitarian assistance in the country with the support of and in close coordination with the IRCS."

Major highlights of ICRC-IRCS collaborative activities in 2013

- The ICRC, along with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, supported the IRCS in developing FMR project training modules and facilitated Training of Trainers (ToT) for master trainers from 17 IRCS branches at the IRCS NHQ. The IRCS Chairman inaugurated a FMR project in Jammu and Kashmir; the ICRC provided 1,000 First Aid kits to the IRCS for this project
- To ensure preparedness of capacity in first aid, five IRCS state branches — Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra and Odisha — organised Training of Trainers (ToT) for 171 volunteers and two staff. These trainers further trained 480 volunteers for six branches — Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Odisha and Nagaland — in basic First Aid training. IRCS Maharashtra also initiated commercial first aid activities in three IRCS district branches
- To promote Red Cross activities in selected schools and colleges, four IRCS state branches organized seven J/YRC counsellors' training for 270 school and college teachers
- Six IRCS branches — Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Odisha and Nagaland — celebrated World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day on 8 May. The focus was on 150 Years of Humanitarian Action to mark the 150th anniversary of the ICRC
- For the management of dead bodies, the ICRC provided 1,500 body bags to support the IRCS NHQ during the Uttarakhand floods. An ICRC staff member, who is also a member of the IRCS National Disaster Water Response Team, was deployed in Uttarakhand during the floods for management of a water purification unit and hygiene promotion
- The ICRC staff facilitated sessions on the Red Cross Movement, International Humanitarian Law, Family News Service and Dead Bodies Management for students of the IRCS Post Graduate Diploma Course in Disaster Preparedness and Response
- The ICRC staff also facilitated sessions on psycho-social support, IHL, FNS and Dead Bodies Management during National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) trainings organized by the IRCS NHQ in Delhi, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal

The ICRC-IRCS plan of action for 2013 incorporated programmes that were implemented at the IRCS state branches of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and the IRCS National Headquarters in New Delhi.

Detailing the roadmap for the future, Ms Werntz says, "The ICRC-IRCS plan of action 2014 represents a new milestone in our cooperation with IRCS as it confirms the commitment of both partners to learn from each other and to enhance the Red Cross response in addressing humanitarian needs in India."



ICRC and Jammu and Kashmir Red Cross State branch staff work together to organise medical supplies before distributing them among various city hospitals following the curfew and strikes in Srinagar in 2010

INTERVIEW

SOUTH ASIA: PARTNERSHIPS WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES KEY TO REACHING PEOPLE IN NEED



Laetitia Courtois, the ICRC's deputy head of operations for South Asia, visited India in January 2014 to get a first-hand insight into the ICRC's activities in the country and to meet Indian Red Cross Society staff and others concerned with the ICRC's work. Here, she speaks about the evolving relationships of the ICRC with national societies in South Asia.

What is the role of the ICRC in South Asia?

South Asia is a complex and varied region, and the ICRC's work here has to be suited to the reality in the different countries. For example, we have been working in Afghanistan for nearly 30 years, and this is one of the ICRC's key operations. Faced with

security challenges, we are trying to ensure that key activities such as support to health services, visits to detainees, assistance programmes and interaction with the Afghan Red Crescent continue to the fullest extent possible, while at the same time reducing staff exposure to risk.

In Nepal and Sri Lanka, the situation is different. There, we adapt our activities to the needs of people affected by past conflicts, focusing, for example, on issues relating to people who went missing during the conflicts.

India has been and will remain a central context for the South Asia region. We look forward to India's support for neutral, non-partisan and impartial humanitarian activities such as those carried out by the ICRC.

How do you see the evolution of partnerships with national societies in South Asia?

I see the partnerships as increasingly growing both in scope and in their level of commitment. Working in partnership with national societies is crucial to the ICRC's efforts to reach out to people in need in an appropriate and efficient way.

In India, our relations with the Indian Red Cross Society go back as far as 1920. In a country prone to natural disasters, we support the work of the national society in emergency response, first aid, and in tracing

and reuniting family members separated by migration, displacement or disaster. There are more than 12 million volunteers and members working throughout India, even in the most remote parts of the country, responding to all sorts of crises people face. We certainly have things to learn from each other.

Across the border in Bangladesh, the partnership that we have with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society allows us to reach people affected by violence. In Nepal, we work hand in hand with the national society to help the families of people who have gone missing as a result of the conflict.

How do you see the ICRC's activities developing in India?

India will remain a central context for our work in South Asia. We are busy with the follow-up of our work in Jammu and Kashmir, which is taking place within the framework of the memorandum of understanding signed by the Indian government. We would also like to maintain or even increase our support for the efforts of the Indian Red Cross to enhance its ability to respond to disasters and other emergencies and to meet long-term needs. Last, but not least, we would like to continue sharing our knowhow in the field of International Humanitarian Law with the government and others in the country.

ICRC meets Odisha chief minister

A high-level International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation headed by Ms Mary Werntz, Head of Regional Delegation, New Delhi, visited Odisha in January. During the visit, the delegation also met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and lauded the preparedness of the government at the time when Cyclone Phailin hit Odisha in 2013. Apart from this, Ms Werntz and Mr Patnaik discussed ways for the ICRC to contribute meaningfully to activities of the Odisha state branch of the Indian Red Cross Society.



Mary Werntz, Head of Regional Delegation, New Delhi, interacts with Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

FIELD EXPERIENCES FROM THE FRONTLINE OF TYPHOON HAIYAN

On 8 November 2013, the pristine coast of Southern Samar in the Philippines was turned into a junkyard of debris, rubble and corpses by a 350-kmph typhoon that washed away everything that lay in its path. To respond to the enormous needs created by the typhoon, the ICRC scaled up its efforts and began coordinating its response with the Philippine Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and National Societies from all around the world. Several months after the tragedy, the ICRC continues to rebuild lives and livelihoods of people in the devastated areas. The Regional Delegation of the ICRC in New Delhi also sent several staff

members to support the rapid emergency response efforts to Typhoon Haiyan. In this edition of our newsletter, two of our ICRC staff members representing different departments of the New Delhi delegation share their experiences of being part of the ICRC's rapid deployment mechanism while also highlighting the challenges of responding to complex emergencies.

Several months after the Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines, the ICRC continues to rebuild lives



The ICRC - Philippine National Red Cross distribution centre in the city. The distribution aims to provide around 5600 families affected by typhoon Haiyan with basic food and non-food items

When I reached the devastated coastline of Southern Samar, all I could see was uprooted coconut trees fallen like matchsticks, houses reduced to empty squares of land and hospital roofs and equipment floating in the flood water. The bodies of those killed in the typhoon had been washed away to another island. Water sources were destroyed and children could be seen all along the 150-km coastline, begging for anything they could get. It was a picture of complete destruction.

As a communication delegate, part of my job was to help the media tell the story of what had happened and what was being done to provide much-needed assistance to the victims.

While the weather conditions remained tough, the biggest challenge was to get the media to shift focus from the over-concentrated Tacloban city to remote areas and coastlands where the damage was massive but remained under-reported.

Even delivering aid was a daunting task because of lashing rain and the never-ending cycle of cyclones, but having clocked over thousands of miles with daily trips punctuated by walks through the rubble, destroyed houses, empty kitchens and closed schools in the affected areas, what kept me going is the great resilience of people with even greater needs.

— **Atishay Abbhi, Communication Officer, ICRC New Delhi**

As a Restoring Family Links (RFL) data administrator, I was sent to Manila to support the Social Services department of the Philippine Red Cross Headquarters (PRC HQ) in handling the numerous requests by people trying to establish contact with their family members in the affected areas. After putting together an RFL team with newly recruited volunteers, the first challenge was to find an efficient way to centralize all the information collected by paper, phone and e-mail. Then, in the second stage, we launched a specific search page for Typhoon Yolanda on the familylinks.icrc.org website. From then on, this website became the main entry point of the family links network, where people could check lists of names of people who were alive and safe and register details of their missing relatives.

The website was updated accordingly, with the help of the ICRC headquarters in Geneva. Of the 35,000 requests received in the first week, in around 1,000 cases, people continued to remain missing more than 10 days after the typhoon hit the Philippines. These cases were pursued actively by the teams.

— **David Vaucher, Restoring Family Links Data Administrator, ICRC New Delhi**

WOMEN PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN PEACEKEEPING



The CRPF women's contingent being sent on a peacekeeping mission to Liberia under the UNMIL attends a briefing conducted by the ICRC

Peacekeeping has come to play a crucial role in management of emergency situations around the world. India, interestingly, has carved out a niche for itself in this international peacekeeping role. The country first participated in a UN peacekeeping mission organized by the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in the Middle East in 1948 and, since then, has participated in nearly 65 UN missions. It has so far deputed more than 1,76,000 troops on various missions and achieved the distinction of being the third largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions after Pakistan and Bangladesh. In coordination with the Military Training Directorate, the ICRC Regional Delegation in New Delhi has been conducting International Humanitarian Law (IHL) training programmes for units assigned to UN missions since 2005.

As peacekeeping has progressed to embrace a wider humanitarian approach, women are increasingly becoming part of the peacekeeping process. This deployment of women peacekeepers is important as the vulnerabilities of women and children in areas that require peacekeeping are specific and different from those of men. Also, since women very often are deprived of the decision-making processes, their inclusion in such missions is seen to significantly boost the confidence of the local people and to help increase reportage of gender-based violence. It was the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in India that was the first to take a progressive step in 2007 by including a women's contingent in its Rapid Action Force (RAF). The first all-women contingent in a peacekeeping mission — a formed police unit from India

— was deployed to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

The ICRC, led by D.K. Arya, IPS (Retd), Consultant to the ICRC, recently organized a dissemination session for a 126-member women's contingent deployed for peacekeeping duties under the UNMIL. Some members of the contingent had previous experience of working for the UNMIL and said that they had instinctively understood and ingrained local social sensibilities and, therefore, were very well accepted. The Assam Rifles contingent that went to Haiti previously reported a similar experience.

This training session focussed on International Human Rights Law and good practices and IHL and endeavoured to sensitize the women to mission-related issues. The session also presented hypothetical scenarios based on real-life cases, while emphasizing the importance of understanding religious, social and cultural patterns of local people.

Talking about the impact of such pre-deployment trainings, Indian Air Force Wing Commander (Retd) Praful Bakshi, Consultant to the ICRC, says, "A few years ago, I had trained an Indian Air Force (IAF) contingent that was heading for Congo and one of the IAF pilots wrote back to the ICRC detailing situations in which the security personnel upheld humanitarian values and how the pre-deployment training helped them earn a good name during their missions."

A CRPF woman officer shares her experience of IHL training

This is the second ICRC training on International Humanitarian Law I have attended. I clearly remember the lessons I learnt in the first training. Thanks to the dissemination material distributed in the first training and the recent pre-induction capsule course, my knowledge on the subject has been enhanced. I now have a better understanding of certain situations we commonly face in the line of duty and how to best address them while respecting IHL and human rights. For instance, how to respect someone's rights while arresting him or her in a situation of agitation or what precautions to take while using firearms. The aim of our peacekeeping mission in Liberia is to maintain law and order in that country with complete understanding of the human rights and, hence, this learning and dissemination material will surely be of great use.



ICRC staff responds to queries of the women police contingent being sent on a peacekeeping mission to Liberia under the UNMIL

ICRC LAUNCHES NEW DELHI BLOG

The ICRC New Delhi Regional Delegation recently launched the New Delhi Blog which aims to create a space for those involved in humanitarian action and thinking to share and exchange their views and experiences. Though the blog will be focused on India, it will also

from experts in diverse fields on a range of relevant themes and issues.

People from various sections of society want to know more about exactly what we do. What is our work in New Delhi or in Jammu and Kashmir? What are the

all these questions and more. The Blog will also bring to you opinion and analytical pieces from a range of external contributors, offering a fresh perspective into humanitarian issues of common concern to all.

The ICRC New Delhi Blog is a 'work in progress'. And that is how we intend it to be — fluid and open to change, so it can be constantly moulded by your opinion and your needs. We invite you to be a part of this virtual conversation, to contribute to debates, to question us when we stumble, to help us identify important issues, to share with us your experiences and expectations, and to pat us on the back for a job well done. For, without your participation, the Blog will be incomplete.



feature stories on humanitarian issues from other countries across South Asia and the globe.

Apart from contributions by the ICRC, the Blog will feature posts from Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, from other humanitarian actors, and

present activities of the ICRC in Syria or in South Sudan? How do we deal with security issues in Afghanistan? Are we not scared to work in difficult situations? How do we maintain neutrality in places where there is no rule of law?

The New Delhi Blog will seek to answer



ICRC New Delhi Staff

Internship for law students

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Unit in the ICRC, Regional Delegation, New Delhi offers a four weeks Internship programme for undergraduate and post graduate law students from India. The internship provides an opportunity to the students to engage in research on IHL issues along with exposure to conferences, workshops and trainings organised by the IHL unit. During the internship the interns work in close coordination with the Legal Advisers of the Unit.

For more details, please contact Dr. Anuradha Saibaba, Legal Adviser-Academic Programmes, at asaibaba@icrc.org

Protection of Detainees

Since 1995, the ICRC Regional Delegation in New Delhi, following the signing 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 January 2013 till the end of December 2013, the ICRC visited 411 detainees through 30 visits carried out in 17 places of detention all over Jammu and Kashmir and two other states of India.

In 2013, the ICRC also issued travel documents enabling 687 persons to travel to third countries. The figure includes assistance provided to refugees from 11 countries across geographies, from Sudan to Sri Lanka.

VIDEOS

150 years of humanitarian action: Where ICRC meets India

On a visit to New Delhi, the ICRC Director-General discusses the strategic partnership between his organization and the Indian Red Cross Society and outlines the humanitarian services the ICRC has provided on the Indian sub-continent since 1917. Speaking at various fora, he highlights humanitarian challenges arising from conflicts around the world and emphasizes the need to improve access to healthcare in conflict areas.



Watch the video at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/film/2014/india-150-years-humanitarian-action-video.htm>

India: ICRC's humanitarian action during the 1965 war

During the India-Pakistan conflict in 1965, the ICRC was recognized as a neutral intermediary, which allowed its delegates to visit prisoners of war and civilian detainees, assist in repatriation and provide necessary relief to the affected population, in coordination with the Indian Red Cross Society. Former ICRC Director-General (1984-1988) Dr Jacques Moreillon, who was on his first ICRC mission to India at the time, takes us back 48 years, when he travelled across the country to carry out the ICRC's humanitarian work.



Watch the video at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/film/2013/india-jacques-moreillon-1964-war-video.htm>

PHOTO GALLERY

Nepal: Helping and protecting victims of conflict since 1961

During the 1996-2006 conflict between Nepalese security forces and Maoist insurgents, the ICRC served as a neutral intermediary, helping civilians and visiting detainees. Since 2006, we have been busy tracing missing persons and addressing the consequences of the conflict. Marking the 150th anniversary of the ICRC's founding, a photo exhibition looks back at our work in Nepal.



Explore the Photo journey at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/photo-gallery/2014/01-27-nepal-history.htm>

Afghanistan: The challenge of caring for the sick and wounded in conflict-affected areas

The reasons for the closure of rural health centres and clinics in conflict-ridden Afghanistan are many and varied. Violations of international humanitarian law are high on the list, with patients delayed or prevented from reaching hospital, medical personnel harassed or kidnapped, and facilities used for purposes other than health care. The following photos taken at Mirwais Regional Hospital in Kandahar last September give an insight into the scale of the challenges faced by medical staff on a daily basis.



Explore the Photo journey at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/photo-gallery/2014/04-04-world-health-day-2104-afghanistan-mirwais.htm>

PUBLICATION



World Health Day: Attacks on patients and health personnel continue

On the occasion of World Health Day, 7 April, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) issued a report on "Violent incidents affecting the delivery of health care" to raise awareness of attacks on people seeking or providing health care.

The ICRC report is based on 1,809 incidents documented between January 2012 and December 2013 in 23 unnamed countries in which violence was used against patients, healthcare personnel, ambulances or medical facilities.

Download the publication at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-4196.pdf>

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