



ICRC / E. Ogbozor

## Red Cross Assists Victims of Violence in Jos

The spate of violence in Jos in Nigeria's northern state of Plateau has left a trail of destruction and loss of life. The violent attacks on five villages 30 kilometres south of the city in March 2010 left hundreds of people dead and forced thousands to flee their homes according to government estimates. This comes in the thick of an already dire humanitarian situation arising from the January 2010 clashes between Christian and Muslim youths in the city that left 305 people dead; properties worth millions destroyed, and over 300 people detained that is still unresolved.

On the whole, these violent incidences necessitated over 24'000 people to flee their homes for refuge in police stations, churches, mosques and makeshift camps. Almost 18'000 displaced people were left to fend for themselves in camps within Jos. While another 9'000 fled to the neighbouring state of Bauchi to live in makeshift camps. In response, the ICRC in cooperation with the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) promptly sent Red Cross teams to provide for the immediate basic needs of those affected.

In the wake of the most recent violence in March 2010, Red Cross teams distributed food and water to about 5,000 displaced people who took refuge in police stations in and around Jos and to some 300 detainees. NRCS volunteers also evacuated 28 injured persons to Jos University Teaching Hospital and gave first aid to 137 wounded detainees at the Police Headquarters.

During the January 2010 clashes, Red Cross teams of volunteers supported by the ICRC administered first aid to 250 victims with

machete and gunshot wounds, bruises or fractures, and evacuated over 150 casualties to nearby hospitals. The Red Cross donated first aid kits, drugs and dressing materials to the Police Staff College Clinic and to displaced persons in the camp at Gangare.

In the days following the January clashes, the Red Cross equally provided food and water to over 4,500 displaced persons in makeshift camps. Household items such as blankets, mats, buckets, plates and cups were distributed to more than 5,000 persons. Those detained as a result of the violence were given food and water, medical supplies, blankets, mats, and hygiene materials such as soap and disinfectant.

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## Editorial

Sporadic outbreaks of violence visited parts of northern Nigeria again in the past months. The Boko Haram crisis remains vivid in our minds, while the persistence of the humanitarian problems from recent sectarian violence in Jos and Bauchi lingers on.

These violent clashes left lives and livelihoods shattered, property destroyed, and several thousand people displaced. The victims of these clashes often become destitute and need to fend for themselves in difficult conditions. In response to the resultant humanitarian situation, the ICRC working closely with the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) acted promptly to provide immediate assistance to meet the basic needs of those affected.

In the Niger Delta and in the north as well, the ICRC in cooperation with the NRCS extended its activities through the community-based first aid programme to give first responder in remote areas the necessary skills and materials to assist. This edition of the bulletin narrates how the Red Cross is working to bring relief to people affected by humanitarian problems.


Further, the ICRC maintained its efforts in spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law (IHL). According to research, the availability of small arms and light weapons makes matters worse for civilians caught up in the fighting. Proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a mammoth challenge in West Africa. Therefore, the ICRC reinforced its efforts in supporting the efforts of ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) in limiting this proliferation, especially in light of the *Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons* that entered into force in November 2009.

In promoting IHL among the armed forces, the ICRC continued to support the Nigerian Armed Forces (NAF) and ECOWAS Standby Force in their integration of the law into their training and operations. While in the Niger Delta, the ICRC maintained contact with the hierarchy of the Joint Task Force (JTF). And last November, the ICRC gave pre-deployment briefings to two battalions of the NAF preparing to go on peacekeeping missions for UNAMID (United Nations Mission in Darfur) in the Sudan's war-torn Darfur region.

On a lighter note, the ICRC celebrated the 150th anniversary since its founder Henry Dunant witnessed the Battle of Solferino (1859) that moved him to the action of humanitarianism and formation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The celebrations in Abuja included an exhibition and concert. Over 350 guests visited the exhibition, attended the concert, and watched exciting songs, dance and drama. An article on our celebration is found in the bulletin's centrespread.

These are some of the highlights in this edition of the bulletin. You will discover more as you read on. In the meantime, the ICRC maintains its humanitarian activities in Nigeria and remains committed to alleviating the suffering of people affected by situations of internal violence with the collaboration of the Nigerian Red Cross.

Happy reading!

  
Jacques Villettaz  
ICRC Head of Delegation / Mission  
Abuja, Nigeria

## ICRC briefs soldiers departing for Peacekeeping Mission

Although the United Nations declared that the war in Sudan's Darfur region had ended last year, the joint peacekeeping operation of the African Union-UNAMID (United Nations Mission in Darfur) is maintained in the country. Therefore, Nigeria as a Troop Contributing Country maintains its commitment to UNAMID. In line with this, the ICRC gives briefing sessions to all Nigerian Army troops going to Darfur.

Last November, the ICRC held briefing sessions for two battalions of 800 soldiers each of the Nigerian Army going to Darfur. The troops were briefed on the humanitarian situation and the activities of the Red Cross Movement. The aim of these briefings is to sensitize the soldiers on the ICRC and international humanitarian law, and facilitate humanitarian relief efforts for the civilian population affected by the armed conflict. This is especially since the main aim of Peace Support Operations (PSO) missions is to maintain security and administer to the welfare of the local population in the country of deployment.

Giving briefings to departing peacekeeping battalions is a customary routine of the ICRC for troops leaving for peacekeeping operations as an avenue to introduce the institution to them, as well as an opportunity for promoting awareness and compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) also known amongst the military as the law of armed conflict. In 2009, the ICRC gave briefings to nine battalions (about 7,200) Nigerian troops departing on peacekeeping missions to troubled countries.

The world over, Nigeria is the fourth largest contributor of troops to United Nations PSO. The country has historically played a central role in peacekeeping operations both in the West Africa region and globally. Presently, four Nigerian Armed Forces battalions are active in the Darfur region of Sudan, and two are in Liberia.



Armoured personnel carrier training at the Nigerian Army Peacekeeping Training Centre, Kaduna





ICRC / Teun Anthony Voeten

Liberia, 2003. Female government fighters in Ganta, near the border with Guinea.

## Limiting the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

**The proliferation of small arms and light weapons remains a scourge in West Africa. Millions of small arms and light weapons are estimated to be in circulation within the region.**

An ICRC study on arms availability and armed conflict conducted in 1999 showed that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons obstructs compliance with international humanitarian law, and makes matters worse for civilians when they are caught up in fighting. To tackle the serious harm caused to civilians by the widespread use of small arms in West Africa, ECOWAS heads of State at a meeting in Bamako in 1998 declared a moratorium on the weapons.

In 2006, this political declaration was transformed into a legally binding instrument, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Convention entered into force in November 2009 after its ratification by nine states namely, Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

"This home-grown treaty is very important for West Africa," said Jacques Villettaz, the head of the ICRC in Nigeria. "It shows that the region is seeking to prevent conflict by limiting the widespread availability of small arms and light weapons and curtailing their misuse."

Last October, legal experts from the ICRC and 35 government

officials from all 15 States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) met for three days in Abuja. The main objective of the meeting was to appraise progress made in ratifying the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its implementation into domestic legislation. Other discussions centred around the national implementation of international humanitarian law treaties such as the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

"These meetings are significant because they are avenues for encouraging member states to sign treaties into laws, and to present to them concrete steps required to implement the key provisions of these treaties into their national legislation," Jacques Villettaz, head of ICRC delegation in Abuja remarked.

The ICRC intervenes on behalf of people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence in order to alleviate their sufferings as stipulated in the Geneva Conventions. By intervening, the ICRC assumes and discharges two functions:

- (a) Being present and active wherever and whenever there is armed conflict or other situations of violence to protect the people affected and to provide them with assistance.
- (b) Promoting and helping to formulate treaties, which lessen unnecessary human loss of life while still achieving military advantage in armed conflicts.

## Celebrating Henry Dunant's 150-year-old legacy through entertainment



Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

In 2009, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement celebrated 150 years since the Battle of Solferino (1859) where Henry Dunant was moved to action forming a humanitarian movement that laid the foundation of the Red Cross by medically assisting wounded and dying soldiers of both opposing forces at the scene of the battle.

Over 360 guests, including Dame Patience Goodluck Jonathan - wife of Nigeria's acting president, Prof. Dora Akunyili, Minister of Information and Communication, and several ambassadors attended the "Humanity Concert" to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Solferino and 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. The event took place in September at the prestigious Transcorp Hilton in Abuja.



Wife of the acting president, Dame Patience Goodluck Jonathan and her entourage

### The Humanity Concert

"This evening of music, dance drama and imagery is meant to draw people's attention to numerous humanitarian challenges," said Jacques Villettaz, the head of the ICRC in Nigeria, in his welcome remarks. "It also serves to remind everyone of their individual responsibility to take action and promote a culture of volunteerism, just as Henry Dunant did 150 years ago."

The concert delighted the audience for three hours with entertainment while at the same time conveying messages on the mandate and work of the ICRC, and on its origin 150 years ago.

The theme of the ICRC's worldwide "Our world-Your move" campaign is that of shared responsibility and of the power of both individual and collective action to make a difference. Members of the student choir of the Rochas Okorocho Foundation, the Rochas Angels, understood this theme very well, since they themselves benefited from a humanitarian "move" by an individual who adopted them when they were street kids. The choir welcomed the audience with a rousing first number: "Just add to the world, try a little kindness," they sang. "Change the world, show some love."

The Rochas Angels were not the only ones to make a musical move at the concert - a popular Nigerian music icon known as Charlyboy did so as well. Charlyboy exploded on the Nigerian music scene as an unusual "brand," sporting outlandish clothes, body piercing and decorations and a bit of a "Mad Max" hairstyle. With time, he became a phenomenon in Nigeria's entertainment industry, and is also known for his social activism and philanthropy.



Music icon, Charlyboy on stage with pupils of Rochas Okorocho Foundation School

Charlyboy came on stage in his body decorations and hard-core leather motorcycle outfit. When he began performing his special song for the anniversary, the entire puzzle surrounding his persona melted away. He won over the audience as he sang of Henry Dunant, the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions, mixing English with local dialects. It was a remarkable sight as the Rochas Angels, dressed in their colourful ceremonial uniforms sang the back-up for Charlyboy by chorusing and synchronizing their dance moves to "all we need is just to make this world better for you and me - let's make this world a better place."



## Remembering ICRC "moves" during the Biafra war

Nigeria was affected by the Biafran civil war in 1961 to 1970. The war claimed casualties from hostilities and resultant spread of disease. Most agricultural activity was interrupted drastically reducing food production and leaving the people dependant on scarce relief assistance especially on the Biafran side. As a result, it is possible that most people died from acute malnutrition and diseases like tetanus and cholera.

Prof. Emma Okoronta, who was the master of ceremony at the concert, nearly succumbed to a virulent form of childhood malnutrition known as kwashiorkor when he was only five years old at the time. Prof. Okoronta survived, however, with the help of the ICRC. He paid tribute to the Red Cross and expressed his appreciation "for the rations of corn meal, Quaker oats, dried eggs, milk and iodine that stopped tetanus from eating up our limbs," as he put it, in a moving voice. "For teaching our mothers to cook the sour leaves so that we could get protein. For many things, including that I would not have been able to make it without the ICRC's support."



War dance from the battle of Solferino re-enacted by the drama troupe of the Abuja Council for Arts and Culture

## The Battle of Solferino

The most thrilling part of the show was a dance-drama presentation, re-enacting the genesis of the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions, by the Abuja Council for Arts and Culture. The use of African songs, dance, scenes and costumes to tell a European story was refreshingly original and well suited to the multiracial audience.

Bare-chested soldiers, who wore colourful raffia skirts and brandished traditional war instruments as they danced to the African drum, the flute and other musical instruments, played the battle scene of Solferino. "I didn't know much about the Red Cross until I started directing this drama," admitted Kayode Aiyegbusi of the Abuja Council for Arts and Culture.

## Showcasing dignity and hope in armed conflict through a photo exhibition

Three days before the Humanity Concert, a photo exhibition featuring 40 archival images on the ICRC's work opened to the public in Abuja. The exhibition "is filled with contrasts... lots of the photos express suffering, but there are also beautiful pictures," said Dr Andreas Baum, the Swiss ambassador to Nigeria.

The picture of Louise, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, attracted the most attention. Louise witnessed the killing of her husband by armed men who attacked her village. They then raped her before forcing themselves on her 81-year-old mother and three young daughters. Many visitors asked how Louise was able not only to survive but to go on to provide counselling to other victims of rape.



ICRC Head of Mission, Jacques Villettaz with the media at the photo exhibition to celebrate 60 years of the Geneva Conventions of 1949

The answer lies in the message the ICRC is trying to convey by hosting the exhibition – the message of courage, dignity, defiance and hope shown by many victims of armed conflict amid pain and suffering. Over 150 visitors from the diplomatic community, civil society, the media, the armed forces, ECOWAS, the government and the public attended the opening.

The talent and expertise that came together to celebrate "Our world-Your move" made everyone feel truly responsible.

## Historical timeline of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

**1859:** Battle of Solferino witnessed by Henry Dunant, founder of the Movement

**1863:** Creation of the "International Committee for Relief to the Wounded" (later became the International Committee of the Red Cross)

**1864:** International Conference organized in Geneva, Switzerland attended by 16 nations, adopted the 1st Geneva Convention, an international treaty that protects the war wounded and those who assist them. Also adoption of the red cross on a white background as a distinctive emblem of protection

**1876:** Adoption of the red crescent as another protective emblem – borne out of the Ottoman - Russian war

**1919:** Creation of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) - a coordinating body for all the national societies

## Red Cross helps victims of clashes in Bauchi



Yahaya Inuwa, Nigerian Red Cross - Bauchi branch

For Yahaya Inuwa, 29 December 2009 started like any other day. Yahaya joined the Red Cross as a volunteer when he was just 7 years old. Now, he is a member of the emergency first aid team and has looked after many wounded people. On this particular morning, the 32-year-old father of five got up early and went to his office in the town of Bauchi, capital of the state of the same name, in northern Nigeria.

At 9 a.m., a call from the Nigerian Red Cross branch in Bauchi changed his plans for the day dramatically. Violent clashes had erupted in the village of Zango, on the outskirts of Bauchi. Yahaya rushed out of the office and drove to Zango.

As he approached the village, Yahaya heard gunfire and shouting crowds. "It was mayhem," he recalls. "There were houses on fire, casualties were sprawled on the ground and people were fleeing in all directions."

It had all started with a violent internal dispute between members of the Kala Kato sect. Police and soldiers sent to restore order came under attack from sect members armed with assault rifles, machetes, swords, daggers and other weapons. Meanwhile, villagers were still trying to get away from the fighting.

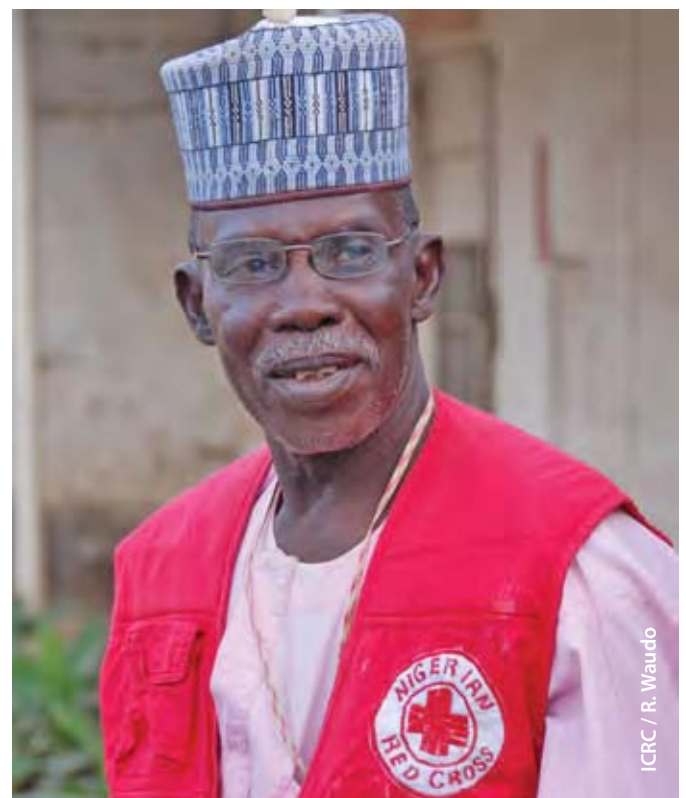
Dandana Ahmadu is a well-respected community leader who now volunteers for the Red Cross. As Yahaya dealt with events at the scene, Ahmadu was at the branch office calling up more volunteers. As soon as the situation allowed, 40 Red Cross volunteers began rescuing children, evacuating the injured and providing first aid.

Sporadic clashes ensued for most of the day. By the time calm returned in the early evening, several people were dead or injured. Red Cross volunteers worked tirelessly into the night, delivering 40 bodies to the morgue and evacuating 16 seriously injured people to a nearby hospital.

Some 300 people sought refuge in a disused army barracks in the area. The Red Cross branch provided them with 200 blankets donated by the State Emergency Management Agency. They returned to their village the following day, after an uneasy calm had returned. Those whose homes had been destroyed went to stay with relatives and friends.

The Nigerian Red Cross and the ICRC provided blankets, sleeping mats, clothing, footwear and toiletries for 23 children who had become separated from their families and were now in protective custody, plus three adults detained by the police. A doctor checked on their health, and over the next few days, the Nigerian Red Cross worked closely with the ICRC to find their families, reuniting most of them with their relatives. Efforts to locate the remaining families are continuing.

The Red Cross helped 12 casualties contact their families from hospital, and the team is providing medical materials and drugs so their treatment can continue until they are able to leave hospital. At the request of the police, Red Cross volunteers and the ICRC helped the authorities and the local imam organize decent burials for the dead.



Dandana Ahmadu, head of community health, Bauchi branch of the Nigerian Red Cross



## Assistance for families affected by the Boko Haram violence

Following the violence that touched the lives of thousands of people in the northern part of Nigeria in July, the ICRC and Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) assisted about 3'500 displaced people. The violent clashes between the Nigerian security forces and members of an Islamic group, Boko Haram resulted in thousands of people fleeing their homes and taking shelter in barracks and police stations around Maiduguri, the capital city of Borno state where the displaced people took refuge in Maimalari barracks.

At the beginning, there was a shortage of food and essential household items for the displaced. In response, the Red Cross team mobilized state authorities to provide food and water. The National Emergency Management Agency distributed basic food items, whilst the Red Cross gave additional supplies such as cooking oil, salt, onions, tomatoes, and pepper. The Red Cross also mobilized the police and public services to begin the important task of collecting the dead from the streets of Maiduguri.

"Red Cross volunteers took the lead in organizing ad hoc shelter for the displaced people. With the support of the ICRC, they registered people, giving psychological support, and alerted them on sanitation issues," said Jacques Villetaz, Head of the ICRC in Nigeria. "The ICRC also donated two First Aid kits to the clinic to aid treatment of those wounded."

Throughout the duration of the crisis, the Red Cross monitored the humanitarian situation closely, and responded to the most urgent needs of those affected. In particular, the Red Cross closely monitored the plight of 80 kidnapped persons - mostly women and children - forcefully taken from different states in the north into Maiduguri until their eventual repatriation back to their places of origin. The Red Cross assisted in reunifying children separated from their families with their loved ones.

## ICRC/Nigerian Red Cross programme to assist victims of misfortune

The ICRC is providing technical and financial support to help the Nigerian Red Cross assist people affected by violence or disaster. This includes helping the National Society train its volunteers on how to reach and assist people without exposing themselves to danger.

This training, known as Safer Access, includes coordinating Red Cross efforts with those of local authorities and security forces, training that the volunteers could put to good use during the violence in Bauchi. Safer Access also includes first-aid training and the pre-positioning of emergency supplies in strategic locations.

Together, the ICRC and the Nigerian Red Cross have developed a programme to provide basic health care to remote communities with limited access to health services. The ICRC has trained Red Cross volunteers from five Nigerian states prone to violence or disaster. Those volunteers are in turn training fellow volunteers in their branches, together with other members of their communities. In addition, the ICRC is equipping Red Cross branches and communities that have the necessary training with first-aid kits for use during emergencies. This pilot project aims to bring basic first aid and community health services to 20 rural communities in a number of areas, including the Niger Delta creeks and northern Nigeria.

In selected prisons, the ICRC and Nigerian Red Cross are maintaining boreholes that provide safe water and have dug pit latrines and built soak-away facilities for the disposal of waste. In some places of detention, detainees receive hygiene materials such as soap, detergent and disinfectant.

During situations of violence or natural disaster, the ICRC helps the Nigerian Red Cross restore contact between separated family members and reunite children separated from their families, as in the recent clashes in Bauchi.



## ICRC Meets Jigawa Hisbah Police

The ICRC met and briefed members of the Hisbah Police in Jigawa State in 2009. Hisbah is an institution established by the state authorities to ensure strict implementation of the Sharia legal system in the state, maintaining law and order, and providing social service to its citizens.

During discussions with the ICRC, the Chairman of the advisory board of Muslim scholars and the Permanent Secretary of the supervising Ministry for the Hisbah Police pledged the cooperation of his ministry with the Red Cross. Some 27 representatives of all local council in the state attended the session.

All over the world, the ICRC maintains contact with individuals, organisations and institutions that can determine the fate of victim of armed conflicts and other situations of violence. This helps these institutions better understand the role of the ICRC as an impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian organization whose overriding interest is caring for and assisting victims.

## The Red Cross Assists in Ogbeljoh

In the aftermath of the Joint Military Task Force's operations with militants in the Niger Delta, the ICRC and the Nigerian Red Cross Society in May 2009 assisted affected civilians. The Red Cross provided food, water and sanitation materials to some 200 displaced women and children in Warri, Delta state.

Civilians who were affected fled and sought refuge in a school building in Ogbeljoh village near the creeks. This emergency assistance given by the Red Cross sought to meet their immediate needs. Whilst the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) delivered long-term assistance for them. This is in line with the mission of the ICRC to protect the lives and dignity of victims of internal violence, and provide them with assistance.

## ICRC collaborates with ECOWAS in Emergency Response Training

The ICRC was invited to participate in a five-

day training workshop organised by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Cotonou, Benin Republic in August 2009. The workshop dubbed "ECOWAS Emergency Response Training (EERT)" attended by representatives of all 15 ECOWAS member states was designed to equip participants with the requisite skills to provide first line emergency humanitarian response during emergencies. The ICRC from Abuja delivered a presentation on "Application of International Humanitarian Law in Complex Emergencies" during the training.

The ICRC in Nigeria collaborates with the ECOWAS Commission in various areas working on common objectives, particularly the national implementation of international humanitarian law treaties into national legislation for ECOWAS member states.

## Nigerian Armed Forces Moves Towards IHL integration

In August 2009, the ICRC organized a one-week workshop on the Integration of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) also known as the Law of Armed Conflict into the training and doctrine of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. The workshop was organized for senior officers drawn from the Defence headquarters and different training institutions of the armed forces. At the end of the workshop, recommendations on the need for the integration of IHL into training and doctrine of the Nigerian Armed Forces by the Chief of Defence Staff were adopted unanimously.

The ICRC works closely with the Nigerian armed forces to promote the integration of IHL into military training and operational procedures.

## ICRC collaborates with the legislature on national implementation of IHL treaties

In July 2009, the ICRC organised two briefing sessions on the importance and need of domesticating international humanitarian law treaties with Nigeria's legislature. Members of the committees on Justice, and Nigeria's lower legislative arm attended the first session. Whilst the

second session was held for members of the committees on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal matters of the upper legislative chamber.

Legal drafters from both the upper and lower legislature as well as from the Federal Ministry of Justice attended a technical workshop organised by the ICRC also in July 2009. The technical workshop introduced the legal drafters to international practices and methods of incorporating international treaties into domestic legal codes. Their newly acquired knowledge and skills will be more important as the Nigerian legislature introduces several treaties on international humanitarian law for national implementation.

## ICRC equips legal experts to teach IHL in the universities

Twenty-seven legal experts from the academia, think-tanks institutions and the Ministry of Justice took part in a workshop on international humanitarian law (IHL) organized by the ICRC in June 2009 in Abuja. The experts discussed the integration of grave breaches or violations of IHL into the Nigeria's Penal Code.

The participants adopted a curriculum for teaching a stand-alone IHL course for Nigerian institutions of higher learning. In addition, a course outline for teaching IHL topics under public international law was agreed upon. They also formed an academic network of IHL teachers in Nigeria, with the ICRC providing technical support for an online forum to share comments, ideas and resources, and to collaborate in areas of research. Finally, a committee was formed to guide the development of, and offer advice to an IHL club for students – already in place at the University of Abuja – in other universities throughout the country.

Since 1996, the ICRC has supported some Nigerian universities in the teaching of IHL. The institution aims to encourage teaching and research in IHL to equip students with the knowledge they would need as future leaders and policy makers.

