



ensuring respect
for the life and dignity
of **PRISONERS**



ICRC



ICRC

| Since 1915 |

Ever since 1915, the ICRC has been visiting people deprived of their freedom in times of conflict. The ICRC began to visit prisoners of war and civilian internees in the early months of the First World War, on its own initiative and with the belligerents' consent. Its objective was to encourage the parties to improve the prisoners' conditions of detention wherever necessary, and to be able to inform their governments and families how they were faring. This practice was subsequently codified in international humanitarian law.

ICRC delegates now visit some 440,000 detainees in approximately 2,000 places of detention in over 70 countries each year.



ICRC

| Crises and violence |

Wherever there is international war or a local conflict, civil war or a national crisis, political, ethnic or religious violence, social order under threat or already destroyed, or a state of emergency – in all such situations, some people or population groups are made vulnerable and exposed to danger. They need protection and assistance.



Ph. Littleton/AFP/Keystone



| Our action |

ICRC delegates visit detainees in conflict situations or other situations of violence. Repeated visits to places of detention serve to prevent disappearances of detainees, combat torture and inhumane treatment, and guarantee acceptable living conditions.

The ICRC enters into a confidential dialogue on these subjects with the authorities in charge: the visits of its delegates are the subject of reports and representations, either oral or written, concerning the fate of the detainees visited.



Boris Heger/ICRC

I Our methods I

In order that its visits to detainees may lead to concrete and credible proposals, the ICRC first submits its conditions to the authorities. Delegates must be allowed to:

- see all detainees falling within the ICRC's mandate and have access to all places where they are held
- interview detainees of their choice in private
- draw up, during the visits, lists of detainees within the ICRC's mandate or receive from the authorities such lists which the delegates may verify and if necessary complete
- repeat visits to detainees of their choice as frequently as they may feel necessary.

It is also very important that the ICRC be able to restore contact between detainees and their families.



Boris Heger/ICRC

I Imprisonment: the risks I

Every day, men and women deprived of their freedom in countries beset by conflict or other crises are exposed to all sorts of perils, such as summary execution or forced disappearance, humiliation, bullying, beatings, torture, isolation, uncertainty about the future, loss of contact with their families, inhumane living conditions, and degrading treatment.



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross
Central Tracing Agency and Protection Division
19 Avenue de la Paix
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
T +41 22 734 6001 F +41 22 733 2057
E-mail: icrc.gva@icrc.org
www.icrc.org

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