



Newsletter of the ICRC Pretoria Regional Delegation

LOOK OUT FOR...

The ICRC annual report for 2006 now available on the ICRC website at www.icrc.org

The new issue of Red Cross and Red Crescent magazine takes a look at the efforts of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement to counter the effects of climate change.

The magazine can be obtained through the Pretoria Delegation or can be ordered directly through the ICRC website.

MISSION Statement

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

World Red Cross Red Crescent Day - Partnerships for Humanity

On 8 May 2007 the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement celebrated the annual World Red Cross Red Crescent Day. The theme for this year's event was "Together for Humanity" and underscored the importance and power of partnerships by stressing the need for stronger local and global alliances in order to meet today's growing humanitarian challenges.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement represents the world's largest humanitarian network. It is made up of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and 185 member National Societies, as well as almost 100 million volunteers.

In her speech, the Head of ICRC Pretoria Delegation, Mrs Catherine Gendre highlighted the driving force that lies in the partnership between those three components of the Movement "The scale of humanitarian challenges that we face today requires a coordinated response. We have to partner at all levels, because together we can

deliver stronger emergency and development programmes."

Mrs Gendre said the Movement is also celebrating this year the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the first two Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The Protocols represent one of the most important legal foundations for the protection of civilians during armed conflict. While the number of countries that have ratified both Protocols shows a growing recognition that wars have limits, there still remains much to be done at national and international levels.

The other speakers, namely Mrs Françoise Le Goff, Head of the International Federation Regional Delegation and Mrs Dalmari Steward, Deputy President of the SARCS (South African Red Cross Society) also insisted on the meaning of working together for the noble cause of serving humankind through the 7 fundamental principles.

Finally, guests were entertained by the amazing voices of the SARCS Soweto Choir, which consists of volunteers.



Mrs Catherine Gendre, Head of the ICRC Pretoria Regional Delegation together with Mrs Dalmari Steward, Deputy President of the SARCS and Mrs Françoise Le Goff, Head of the International Federation Regional Delegation.

Thirty years ago, we witnessed the international community adopting on June 8, 1977, two Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the first relating to the protection of victims of International Armed Conflicts and, the second, to the protection of victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts. The Protocols constitute a very important stage in the codification of International Humanitarian Law, or 'IHL' as it is commonly referred to, because they reaffirmed and supplemented the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and secured better protection in armed conflict for the individual, women and children in particular. The 30th anniversary of these two Protocols also commemorates a milestone in the evolution of how wars are fought. They represent a recognition that every war has its limits, irrespective of the nature of the conflict.

Thirty years on, the Additional Protocols and International Humanitarian Law generally, are faced with new challenges, such as a prevalence of asymmetrical conflicts, the effects of the 'war against terror', the appearance of new non state actors, the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the development of weapons causing superfluous injury and unnecessary suffering. Faced with these, respecting International Humanitarian Law and ensuring its respect, are of primordial importance.

Although the 1977 Additional Protocols are among the most widely accepted legal instruments in the world, there still remains much to be done to ensure that IHL is fully implemented and enforced. With this in mind the States participating to this year's annual Regional Seminar in Pretoria, which coincided with the 30th anniversary, examined the impact of the evolution of war and modern day warfare on compliance with International Humanitarian Law. States in the region reaffirmed their commitment to IHL, and to working as a region in placing IHL implementation higher on the list of priorities.

Finally, it is worth remembering that it is not only the lawmakers who play a role in implementing IHL, but all of us, Civil Society, Academia, students ... After all it is in times of peace that the strongest foundations can be laid to ensure the full respect of this important body of law in times of conflict.

This issue of Temba is dedicated to the 30th Anniversary of the Additional Protocols.

Jamie Williamson

ICRC celebrates 30th anniversary of Additional Protocols



ICRC Photo / Anniversary / Additional Protocol

The 8th of June 2007 marks the 30th anniversary of the Additional Protocols that were drawn up essentially as a response to the increased suffering of civilians in armed conflict due in part to developments in weapons technology. They introduced essential rules relating to the conduct of hostilities and the methods and means of warfare, the aim of which was to strengthen protection for civilians. In particular, they formulated the important principle of distinction between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives.

Controversial at the time, but much less so today, were the Protocol's innovations regarding combatant and prisoner of war status. While some states felt uneasy about the changes introduced, they reflected the new reality of international relations – the phenomenon of guerrilla warfare. The same reality gave rise to another controversial aspect of the treaty – its definition of international armed conflicts, which was expanded to include wars of self-determination.

If Additional Protocol I was a step forward in adapting the law to new demands, Additional Protocol II – which supplements article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions – was the first international treaty devoted exclusively to the protection of persons affected by non-international armed conflicts. Its rules on fundamental guarantees for all those not involved in the fighting, on the treatment of persons deprived of liberty and on judicial guarantees for individuals subject to penal prosecution represented

a landmark in the development of International Humanitarian Law. The Protocol gave legal expression to a notion that is widely accepted today – that armed conflicts taking place within the confines of a country are a matter of international concern. To that end, the Protocol also established important rules protecting civilians from the danger of military operations in internal armed conflicts.

Both Additional Protocols are still as relevant now as they were 30 years ago principally because the fundamental values of humanity and dignity on which they are based are timeless. Examples of flagrant violations of the Protocols – and of International Humanitarian Law in general – abound. Terror campaigns against civilians, the use of rape as a weapon of war, the recruitment of child soldiers, forced displacement – the list goes on – are, sadly, all too common features of contemporary conflict. The polarisation of world politics in the 21st century post 9/11 and the ultimate humanitarian consequences of what is often referred to as the "global war on terror" pose a huge challenge. The proliferation and fragmentation of non-state armed groups, who may have little or no regard for the law of war, poses another. But whereas accountability may once have been the exception rather than the rule in conflict, a wind of change in this regard is blowing ever-stronger thanks largely to a growing public awareness of International Humanitarian Law.

In addition, national legislators and courts are finally starting to live up to

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their respective responsibilities of ensuring that domestic legislation recognizes the criminal responsibility of those who violate International Humanitarian Law, and of actually enforcing such legislation. The message is clear: war criminals can no longer take impunity for granted.

But despite this undeniable progress, enforcement at both national and international levels is still a drop in the ocean. While the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols provide a clear legal framework for the necessary restraints to prevent human suffering in armed conflict, the political will to fully implement them remains insufficient. Parties to conflict have in many cases not yet realised the wisdom that applying and enforcing these legal restraints is in their own best interest: failure to prevent abuse against others ultimately lifts the safeguard against similar abuse in return.

ICRC honours its long serving employees



Pictured from left are: Catherine Gendre (Head of Delegation), Mavis Moabi (Clerk), Susan Ngobeni (Domestic Staff), Freddy Ndhundhuma (Purchaser), Elias Rihlampfu (Head of Fleet), Margareth Kekana (Domestic Staff), Susan Newall (Assistant to Head of Delegation) and William Rampora (Gardener).

In May the ICRC Pretoria Delegation for Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean had the pleasure to celebrate 20 years service

of not one, not two but seven employees. The seven have been with the ICRC at the Pretoria Delegation for 20 years or more.

Seventh Annual Regional Seminar on IHL in Pretoria

The Pretoria Regional Delegation held a seminar on the ratification and implementation of International Humanitarian Law from 5 - 8 June 2007, in Pretoria, South Africa. The Seminar, co-hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of South Africa, was attended by governmental representatives from sixteen countries in Southern and Eastern Africa, namely Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Kenya, Lesotho, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and by the Director of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. It was facilitated by ICRC delegates from Geneva, Nairobi and

Pretoria as well as some external experts.

The South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Sue van der Merwe who opened the seminar emphasized the importance of International Humanitarian Law and stated "The nature of armed conflicts is increasingly changing. Those conflicts between states account for only a small proportion of overall conflicts and many conflicts are now waged between non-states actors, consisting of groups within countries, or by armed groups against states".

The seminar focused on the ratification and implementation of International Humanitarian Law instruments in order

to further a regional dynamic for the full implementation of these treaties. The participants also marked the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977 to the Geneva Conventions. It was noted that the adoption of the Protocols represented a very important stage in the codification of IHL because they complemented the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, while adapting humanitarian standards to the then realities.

The participants noted that International Humanitarian Law continues to develop and adapt to new circumstances, changing conflicts and new actors and weaponry, and that much of this evolution can be credited to the willingness of States today to put in place mechanisms that alleviate the suffering of victims of armed conflict.

At the end of the seminar, the participants committed themselves to give publicising, applying and promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law a higher priority in their policy and programmes. They also urged States to accede to International Humanitarian Law treaties to which they are not yet party and, where necessary, to examine the existing legislation and adopt appropriate and effective legislation to implement those to which they are a party. Finally, they invited the States to promote and support the international efforts to tackle the scourge of inaccurate and unreliable cluster munitions through the holding of a meeting in Southern Africa under the initial auspices of SADC.



South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mrs Sue van der Merwe together with Mrs Catherine Gendre, Head of the ICRC Pretoria Regional Delegation during the opening ceremony.

PRETORIA Delegation

Head of Delegation:

Catherine Gendre

Co-operation Delegate /Deputy Head of delegation:

Martin Hahn

Communications:

Annemarie Watt

Exploring Humanitarian Law:

Camille Karangwa

Information Centre:

Fundiswa Buthelezi

Protection Delegate:

Ion Smochina

Tracing:

Henrietta Nthathé

Regional Legal Adviser:

Jamie Williamson

Legal & Universities:

Garth Abraham

Delegate to the Armed Forces:

Andrew Carswell

Delegates to the Police:

Vadym Korsinov

Administrator:

Pierre Brocher

CONTACT THE Delegation

If you would like to receive further issues of TEMBA, or to be on the mailing list, please contact the Communications Unit. Or for additional information concerning various ICRC programmes, please contact us at:

Tel: (27) – 12 430 7335/6/7

Fax: (27) – 12 430 4471

E-mail: icrcpre@wn.apc.org

<http://www.icrc.org>

HELP Course at the School for Military Health Training

The HELP (Health Emergencies in Large Populations) Course is part of the programme Military Mass Casualty that is offered by the School for Military Health Training in South Africa. Mass casualty management and the principles thereof date as far back as the Napoleonic Wars. Military physicians had to deal with hundreds of injured and dying patients after a battle.

A major problem facing medical responders and emergency personnel in managing the large number of casualties is often the co-ordination and allocation of health resources during an adverse event creating a massive influx of injured persons. The early establishing of medical command and control to allocate and co-ordinate medical resources are the key factors for the effective

management of such influx of patients.

In this line, the course presented by the School for Military Health Training aims to address the problem pertaining to the lack of medical command and control following a mass casualty incident or disaster event. Students are also trained in aspects of environmental health, food and nutrition, epidemiology and communicable diseases. The presentation of this course is a joint venture between the School for Military Health Training, the ICRC and the School of Health Systems and Public Health at the University of Pretoria. This year, the School for Military Health Training has also hosted five Medical Officers from the Egyptian Defence Force of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



Members of the South African Military Health Services and the Egyptian Defence Force attending the Military Mass Casualty Course

Soccer against violence

The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) hosted a "soccer against violence" tournament that took place between March and May in the Germiston province. The project that was supported by the ICRC saw more than 700 students from 32 high-schools taking part in the tournament. The tournament promoted respect, non-violence, tolerance, and fairness. All players had to commit to abstain from violence and drugs during the course of the tournament. This very special championship saw its climax on the 5th of May final in the Nigel stadium. The tournament

was also supported with a sports celebrity signature initiative coordinated by MNET Supersport.

