

# KUALA LUMPUR (regional)

COVERING: Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore



ICRC regional delegation + ICRC office

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	971
Assistance	35
Prevention	2,169
Cooperation with National Societies	517
General	-
	<b>3,693</b>
	<i>of which: Overheads 225</i>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	91%
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## PERSONNEL

Expatriates	13
National staff (daily workers not included)	25

## KEY POINTS

### In 2011, the ICRC:

- ▶ visited irregular migrants held in 14 immigration detention centres (some 7,700 people) and detainees in 3 prisons (some 2,800 people) in Malaysia
- ▶ with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, facilitated the exchange of RCMs between the inmates of 2 migrant detention centres and their families in 26 other countries
- ▶ following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, provided logistics and technical support to the Japanese Red Cross Society in restoring family links and helped it minimize its staff's risk of exposure to radiation
- ▶ with the Malaysian government and the Malaysian Red Crescent, co-hosted the 3rd Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent IHL Conference in Kuala Lumpur
- ▶ organized 2 seminars for senior Malaysian police officials on international human rights law, international policing standards and ICRC activities
- ▶ contributed to regional debate on humanitarian issues at events organized by the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific and the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in Malaysia

Having worked in Malaysia since 1972, the ICRC established a regional delegation in Kuala Lumpur in 2001 and a presence in Japan in 2009. It works with governments, regional bodies and National Societies to promote IHL and humanitarian issues and to gain support for its activities. In Malaysia, the ICRC visits detainees and works with authorities to address issues identified during those visits. It also enables detained migrants to contact their families. The regional resource centre supports delegations in East and South-East Asia and the Pacific in promoting IHL and strengthening support for the ICRC and cooperation within the Movement.

## CONTEXT

In Malaysia, the presence of around 2 million irregular migrants, primarily from Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines, continued to create tension, particularly in Sabah, where in some areas they outnumbered the local population. Detained irregular migrants were particularly vulnerable, while the Malaysian authorities continued to work to improve conditions in immigration detention centres, in cooperation with external agencies. Official recognition of another vulnerable group in the country, victims of trafficking, received a boost with the launch of a five-year National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons 2011–15. A biometric identification system was introduced in an attempt to monitor the movement of irregular migrants and curb human trafficking.

Japan's largest-ever recorded earthquake struck the country in March, triggering a massive tsunami which wiped out vast areas along the north-eastern coastline and damaged the Fukushima nuclear plant, causing the leakage of radioactive material. The Japanese Red Cross Society supported the authorities' response to the disaster, in which reportedly more than 16,000 people died, 4,000 went missing and 115,000 were displaced. The Self-Defense Forces deployed half of their 200,000 personnel, representing their largest mobilization in recent Japanese history.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The Kuala Lumpur regional delegation continued to work with the national authorities and other stakeholders in the countries covered to highlight and address humanitarian needs and enhance awareness of the relevance of IHL and the role of the ICRC. Regionally, it also helped expand humanitarian dialogue and interaction with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see *Jakarta*) and with leading think-tanks.

Cooperation with the Malaysian Immigration Department, the Department of Depot Management and the Prisons Department continued to develop, leading to authorization of ICRC visits to all people held in immigration detention centres, as well as in prisons and in shelters for trafficked persons throughout the country. ICRC delegates, including medical and water and sanitation specialists, shared their findings and recommendations confidentially with the relevant authorities. Several of these recommendations were implemented in due course.

Malaysia co-hosted the 3rd Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent IHL Conference in June 2011, together with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, the ICRC and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		41		
RCMs distributed		92		
Names published on the ICRC family-links website		5,619		
<b>Documents</b>				
People to whom travel documents were issued		141		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>			Women	Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually		186	10	116
Detainees newly registered		186	10	116
Number of visits carried out		19		
Number of places of detention visited		17		
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		259		
RCMs distributed		36		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		166		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children I. Malaysia only

Following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the ICRC sought to support the Japanese Red Cross in responding to the needs of those affected, primarily by helping set up a special website for restoring links among separated family members and by sharing expertise on minimizing its staff's risk of exposure to radiation.

The ICRC and the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly held a regional round-table in Kyoto on the 1977 Additional Protocols. The ICRC also organized an intensive IHL summer course together with the Osaka School of International Public Policy.

The region's armed forces continued to work with the ICRC to increase knowledge of IHL and the organization's role and mandate. The ICRC was regularly invited to speak to Malaysian army and police officers and Singaporean army officers at higher training institutions and prior to their deployment on peacekeeping missions and to Afghanistan. Contacts were nurtured with the media and civil society, including leading Malaysian Islamic humanitarian NGOs, as well as with schools and universities to promote IHL and raise awareness of humanitarian issues among future decision-makers.

The ICRC worked with the National Societies of Japan, Malaysia and Singapore to restore family links and promote IHL through capacity building and joint activities. In Malaysia, the Red Crescent Society and the ICRC expanded a pilot project to provide family-links services to detained irregular migrants. The Japanese and Malaysian National Societies continued to use the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme in schools, with ICRC support, while in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore steps were being taken to introduce selected programme modules in National Society youth syllabuses.

The International Federation and the ICRC held regular meetings to strengthen coordination and synergies in building the capacities of the region's National Societies.

## CIVILIANS

In Malaysia, people made use of the Movement family-links network to re-establish and maintain contact with relatives residing or detained/interned abroad. They included the families of three people held in the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba, who stayed in touch with their interned

relatives by means of RCMs and received direct news of them via an ICRC delegate. Refugees and asylum seekers travelled to countries that had accepted them for resettlement after 141 ICRC travel documents were issued in coordination with UNHCR and the relevant embassies.

The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and the ICRC initiated dialogue on issues related to the protection and care of women victims of human trafficking, after which women staying at two shelters run by the ministry received ICRC visits. At end-2011, the ICRC offered to provide support for the shelters, namely in the form of material assistance, construction of a community kitchen and family-links services. The ICRC also proposed carrying out a confidential assessment of the protection concerns of the victims of human trafficking.

Within the framework of its cooperation with the Department of Depot Management (see *People deprived of their freedom*), the ICRC also visited male victims of human trafficking at a shelter run by the department and the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants, to assess their living conditions and potential protection needs.

Following the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, the Japanese Red Cross played a central role in meeting the relief, medical and psychological needs of those affected. It worked to help separated family members restore contact, receiving ICRC support to set up a special family-links website, as well as telecommunications material. The Malaysian and Singaporean National Societies publicized the website and dealt with requests which arose in response.

Regionally, the ICRC continued to follow migration trends closely with the aim of anticipating and exploring possible humanitarian needs and appropriate responses.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Cooperation with the Malaysian Immigration Department, the Department of Depot Management and the Prisons Department continued to develop, leading to the authorization of ICRC visits to all immigration detention centres, as well as to a selected number of prisons throughout the country, to be carried out according to the organization's standard procedures. Having developed constructive cooperation with the ICRC, the Prisons Department gave its green light for further ICRC visits, including to security detainees.

Foreign migrants in 14 immigration detention centres (holding over 7,700 people) and detainees in 3 prisons (holding some 2,800 people) benefited from ICRC visits to assess their treatment and living conditions. ICRC delegates, including medical and water and sanitation specialists, shared their findings and recommendations confidentially with the relevant authorities. During subsequent visits, a number of improvements were observed.

At an ICRC-hosted workshop, commanders and senior officers from immigration detention centres discussed a number of priority issues that the ICRC had identified during its visits. The Department of Depot Management agreed in principle to the ICRC's offer of support to improve health services in such centres. It proceeded with the design of new centres and the rehabilitation of old ones, receiving technical input from the ICRC. Meanwhile, two officials from the Prisons Department gained new expertise in the management of prison infrastructure at an ICRC regional workshop in Thailand (see *Bangkok*).

The authorities and the ICRC began discussing the issue of unaccompanied/separated minors detained in immigration centres. Five such minors were reunited with their families in Cambodia and Viet Nam, with some help from the ICRC and the National Societies of these countries. In total, among the 116 minors monitored individually, the ICRC registered 22 detained separated minors on the peninsula and 92 in Sabah.

Thanks to a new Malaysian Red Crescent/ICRC family-links project in one immigration detention centre, detained migrants sent 188 RCMs to family members in 26 countries and received 29 RCMs in reply. The project was extended to another detention centre before the end of 2011, with the collection of 14 RCMs, including 2 from separated minors. In addition, during its visits, the ICRC collected 52 RCMs from people held in immigration centres (including 13 from separated minors) and 5 RCMs from detainees in prisons to send to their families, and distributed 7 replies (including 5 for separated minors).

In Japan, the Japan Bar Association invited the ICRC to participate in the debriefing of four members of a commission established in 2010 to monitor migrant detention centres. This was an opportunity for the association to take advantage of ICRC technical expertise in this domain.

## AUTHORITIES

The countries of the region worked on IHL implementation, with ICRC technical support. The Malaysian government declared its intention to accede to the Rome Statute, with indications that this might also involve becoming party to the 1977 Additional Protocols.

Government officials increased their awareness of humanitarian issues and the relevance of IHL and humanitarian principles through regular dialogue with the ICRC and attendance at ICRC-supported events. Senior government officials from 13 East and South-East Asian countries participated in a round-table on the 1977 Additional Protocols, co-organized with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kyoto with the aim of encouraging more States to ratify or accede to the Protocols. Representatives of Commonwealth governments, their national IHL committees and National Societies discussed their experiences in national implementation and IHL developments at the 3rd Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent IHL Conference, co-hosted by the Malaysian government with the support of the Malaysian Red Crescent.

In Brunei Darussalam, the Foreign Ministry and the ICRC continued to discuss the implementation of the Geneva Conventions Order 2005. The Defence Ministry's military legal unit expressed an interest in receiving support for IHL training for the armed forces.

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Members of the region's armed forces attending command and staff colleges and warfare training centres and participating in military exercises learnt more about their obligations under IHL and about the ICRC's mandate and activities during dedicated training sessions. Malaysian armed forces and police officers and Singaporean army officers preparing for UN peace-keeping missions and operations in Afghanistan attended ICRC predeployment briefings.

At a seminar on international cooperation convened by the Japanese National Institute for Defense Studies, a wide audience shared views on humanitarian assistance, neutrality and impartiality, referring to practical experiences on the ground. The booklet "Direct Participation in Hostilities" was translated with the assistance of a Japanese expert.

Senior Malaysian police officials discussed policing challenges, the needs of vulnerable populations and ICRC activities for detainees at two seminars on international policing standards. Discussions continued with the Malaysian police regarding further ICRC input into training programmes.

Three high-ranking military officers from Japan, Malaysia and Singapore took part in the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations held in South Africa (see *International law and cooperation*).

## CIVIL SOCIETY

The general public in Japan and Malaysia enjoyed access to multimedia material on IHL and humanitarian issues in local languages. Journalists worked with the ICRC to cover topical subjects, increasing their knowledge of humanitarian issues through field trips and participation in a regional media conference (see *Philippines*). While the Japanese media more frequently covered ICRC activities, members of the public had a chance to visualize and debate humanitarian issues at the "Our World at War" exhibition in Yokohama, held under Japanese Red Cross auspices, and at a symposium on the situation in North Africa, organized with the Middle East Research Institute of Japan.

As part of the development of dialogue with Japanese and Malaysian specialist circles, 40 members of the Japan Institute of International Affairs discussed current challenges facing the ICRC and IHL, while members of 13 leading Islamic humanitarian NGOs examined the risks faced by humanitarian aid workers at a seminar organized with the Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement. Interaction with regional bodies and think-tanks resulted in active ICRC participation in events such as the 2011 Asia-Pacific Roundtable in Kuala Lumpur, organized by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, and in the General Conference of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific held in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

Leading universities in Japan, Malaysia and Singapore continued to integrate IHL teaching. Students increased their understanding of the subject at national moot court and debating competitions, workshops and lectures. Teams from all three countries

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took part in the regional IHL moot competition in Hong Kong (see *Beijing*). Forty students and practitioners took part in an intensive IHL summer course at the Osaka School of International Public Policy in Japan. Academics, researchers, and government and military officials from 10 countries enhanced their IHL expertise at the sixth South-East and East Asian Teaching Session on IHL co-organized with the National University of Malaysia.

Japanese and Malaysian schoolchildren learnt about humanitarian principles through the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

### **RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The Japanese Red Cross played a central role in meeting the needs of the people affected by the earthquake and tsunami. It received support from the ICRC to carry out family-links activities (see *Civilians*) and in its relations with the media and benefited from its expertise in minimizing its staff's risk of exposure to radiation.

Elsewhere in the region, the National Societies continued to provide family-links services, with the ICRC, where relevant, as for example in Malaysia (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

The Japanese Red Cross worked with the ICRC to promote knowledge of IHL and the Movement through the production of Japanese-language multimedia materials and the publication of joint features on the National Society website. The Malaysian Red Crescent organized further training for a core group of trainers, to expand dissemination efforts at branch and chapter levels.

The Japanese and Malaysian National Societies continued to implement the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme, receiving ICRC support for staff training and the production of teaching materials. Following a first train-the-trainer workshop in Brunei Darussalam, the National Society expressed its intention to incorporate the programme into its secondary school youth syllabus. In the wake of a similar workshop held in 2010, the Singapore Red Cross Society adapted selected programme modules for inclusion in its revised youth syllabus and began testing the new materials.

The International Federation and the ICRC continued to strengthen coordination and synergies in building the capacities of the region's National Societies.