

BANGKOK (regional)

COVERING: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Thailand, Viet Nam



ICRC regional delegation + ICRC office ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

Having first established a presence in Thailand in 1975 to support its operation in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, the ICRC now promotes the ratification and implementation of IHL treaties and the integration of IHL into military training regionwide. It strives to raise awareness of humanitarian issues and supports National Societies in developing their IHL promotion and family-links activities. It seeks to protect and assist vulnerable populations in Thailand, visits detainees in Thailand and in Cambodia, where it also supports the authorities in improving prison management, and helps meet the need for affordable, good-quality prostheses.

CONTEXT

Recurrent tensions between Cambodia and Thailand over the disputed border and, in particular, the ancient temple site of Preah Vihear escalated in February and April into armed border clashes that left some 25 soldiers dead and dozens wounded on both sides. While civilian casualties were limited, a reported 90,000 people were temporarily displaced. On both occasions, fighting subsided after a few days and was followed by an uneasy truce. Mediation efforts by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) met with mixed success.

Large swathes of Cambodia, central and northern Thailand, and Viet Nam were struck by devastating floods in October. Hundreds of people lost their lives and millions of livelihoods were affected. Parts of the Thai capital were under water, and the national economy ground to a standstill. The south of Thailand had suffered heavy flooding in March.

The Thai prime minister dissolved parliament and elections were held in July. The Pheu Thai Party won the majority and its leader Yingluck Shinawatra became the country's first female prime minister.

The country's three southern border provinces continued to be plagued by violent incidents, in particular drive-by shootings and bombings in public places, causing deaths and injuries among civilians.

The conflict in Myanmar had a spillover effect in border areas of Thailand, with Myanmar civilians seeking refuge both within and outside camps.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC further consolidated its cooperation with the Thai Ministry of Justice and the Royal Thai Armed Forces with an expansion of its activities on behalf of people deprived of their freedom. It was granted access to detainees held in military detention facilities in the south of the country and to wider categories of detainees held in civil prisons, including irregular migrants. During the October floods, the ICRC provided food and material assistance to tens of thousands of detainees and support to flood-affected prisons in the central, northern and north-eastern parts of the country.

During the border clashes between Cambodia and Thailand, the ICRC reminded both national authorities of their obligations under IHL. Together with the National Societies, it provided

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	3,847
Assistance	2,683
Prevention	2,232
Cooperation with National Societies	1,204
General	-

► 9,966

of which: Overheads 608

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	91%
---------------------------	-----

PERSONNEL

Expatriates	35
National staff (daily workers not included)	85

KEY POINTS

In 2011, the ICRC:

- ▶ during border clashes, reminded the Cambodian and Thai authorities of their responsibilities under IHL
- ▶ provided emergency assistance for some 59,000 detainees in Thailand and 2,600 in Cambodia following devastating floods
- ▶ conducted first visits to a military detention facility in southern Thailand and an immigration detention centre in Bangkok
- ▶ held first dissemination sessions for Thai army units preparing for deployment in the south
- ▶ with the Cambodian authorities, organized two round-tables to discuss solutions to prison overcrowding
- ▶ improved water supply for 756 Hmong villagers in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Main figures and indicators		PROTECTION	Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Red Cross messages (RCMs)					
RCMs collected			3	UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs distributed			8		
Phone calls facilitated between family members			2,934		
Documents					
People to whom travel documents were issued			13		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) ¹					
ICRC visits					
Detainees visited			67,030	Women	Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually			634	9	
Detainees newly registered			188	7	
Number of visits carried out			88		
Number of places of detention visited			49		
Restoring family links					
RCMs collected			12		
RCMs distributed			3		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support			120		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued			1		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children 1. Cambodia, Thailand

Main figures and indicators		ASSISTANCE	Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Economic security, water and habitat					
Food ¹		Beneficiaries	98,136		
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	98,136		
Essential household items ¹		Beneficiaries	98,136		
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	98,136		
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives ²		Beneficiaries	35	94%	
Water and habitat activities ³		Beneficiaries	756	52%	30%
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
Economic security, water and habitat					
Food ²		Beneficiaries	39,581		
Essential household items ¹		Beneficiaries	68,663		
Water and habitat activities ¹		Beneficiaries	9,855		
WOUNDED AND SICK					
Hospitals					
Patients whose hospital treatment has been paid for by the ICRC ²		Patients	111		
Water and habitat					
Water and habitat activities ⁴		Number of beds	195		
Physical rehabilitation ⁴					
Centres supported		Structures	3		
Patients receiving services		Patients	10,646	1,295	781
New patients fitted with prostheses		Patients	175	21	6
Prostheses delivered		Units	1,629	127	43
		<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	1,369		
New patients fitted with orthoses		Patients	289	65	109
Orthoses delivered		Units	1,397	248	576
		<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	6		
Crutches delivered		Units	2,776		
Wheelchairs delivered		Units	486		

1. Cambodia, Thailand 2. Thailand only 3. Lao PDR 4. Cambodia only

assistance to many thousands of displaced people. An ICRC delegate was present during the handover by the Cambodian authorities to the Thai authorities of a captured Thai soldier.

The ICRC continued to monitor the consequences of the violence on the civilian population in southern Thailand and the spill-over effects of the armed conflict and violence in Myanmar on the Thai-Myanmarese border. In southern Thailand, delegates discussed with the relevant authorities first-hand information on the humanitarian situation collected during field trips. The ICRC broadened its network of contacts with the Thai military and security forces, government representatives and community leaders there, started holding dissemination sessions for military

units preparing for deployment in the area, and organized workshops on international human rights law and internationally recognized standards relating to policing for police officers there. The ICRC paid for the surgical treatment in Thai hospitals of 111 patients with weapon-related injuries who could not be treated in Myanmar.

In Cambodia, within the framework of its visits to detainees, the ICRC increased its cooperation with and support to the General Department of Prisons, providing guidance on issues related to prison management, health, water and sanitation. After a report on the causes of prison overcrowding was presented to the main stakeholders in the Ministries of Interior and Justice, two round-table

meetings helped stimulate dialogue on how best to address the issue. Dialogue also developed with the National Police.

Victims of mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) and other disabled persons in Cambodia received physical rehabilitation services in ICRC-supported structures. The ICRC helped the relevant authorities take over full responsibility for managing two regional rehabilitation centres and the factory supplying prosthetic/orthotic components to all centres in the country.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the Lao Red Cross and the ICRC continued to organize targeted assistance for particularly vulnerable members of the Hmong minority living in remote villages.

In order to promote accession to further IHL treaties, their national implementation and the integration of IHL into military doctrine, training and operating procedures, the ICRC worked with government representatives in all four countries covered, including staff of the ASEAN national secretariats. Work with universities also encouraged IHL teaching. The Thai Red Cross Society and Ministry of Education tested and finalized the adapted Exploring Humanitarian Law modules in Thai, in preparation for their implementation in schools in 2012.

The region's National Societies, supported by the ICRC, provided relief to victims of violence and natural disaster and strengthened their capacities in family links, mine action and the promotion of the Fundamental Principles and IHL.

CIVILIANS

Following the border clashes, the Thai Red Cross facilitated ICRC access to the border areas and contacts with civil and military authorities in Thailand. Over 90,000 temporarily displaced Cambodian and Thai civilians received shelter and other emergency material assistance from their National Societies and the ICRC.

Whether directly targeted or caught in crossfire, the civilian population of southern Thailand continued to bear the brunt of the ongoing violence. Relevant authorities and religious and community leaders and the ICRC regularly reviewed the humanitarian situation and issues of concern on the basis of first-hand information collected by delegates in the affected areas (see *Authorities, Armed forces and other bearers of weapons* and *Civil society*). After receiving vocational training and material input, direct victims, including families who had lost their breadwinners, set up small sustainable businesses such as sewing and catering to restore their livelihoods.

Along the Thai-Myanmar border, Myanmarese civilians fleeing clashes between the Myanmar army and armed opposition groups shared their concerns with ICRC delegates about the humanitarian situation in Myanmar and their current needs. In their contacts with the Thai authorities, the ICRC and the National Society sought to ensure that Myanmarese civilians got basic assistance and that vulnerable people were not sent back against their will.

Specific concerns, such as the use of anti-personnel mines and the recruitment of children, were taken up with the relevant parties when possible (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*). The ICRC continued to participate in coordination meetings with humanitarian actors operating in the area.

During the floods in northern Thailand, 250 families received essential household items and food from the Thai Red Cross with ICRC support.

In the Lao PDR, together with members of the Hmong minority living in two remote villages in Xieng Khuang province, the Lao Red Cross/ICRC completed two projects initiated in 2010. As a result, 756 people gained access to sufficient water for households and livestock following the construction of a new gravity-fed water system, and 116 among them benefited from new latrines. Before the onset of winter, after an assessment of the situation in villages further away, 168 Hmong families in eight villages received clothing and blankets. Over 504 children received school materials.

Separated relatives benefit from the Red Cross family-links network

Civilians in the region were able to restore and maintain contact with relatives through tracing and RCM services. Minors deported from Malaysia were reunited with their families with the help of the Cambodian and Vietnamese Red Cross Societies.

The National Societies worked to strengthen their family-links services with ICRC support. For example, the Red Cross of Viet Nam launched a needs assessment. The Thai National Society worked with the government's disaster-preparedness department and the ICRC to plan family-links services in natural disasters.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in Cambodia and Thailand received ICRC visits, carried out according to the organization's standard procedures, with particular attention paid to vulnerable detainees, including migrants, and women. After the visits, delegates shared their findings and any recommendations on detainees' treatment and living conditions confidentially with the detaining authorities. Detainees sometimes used the National Society/ICRC family news network to exchange news with their families and, in Thailand, received visits from them with ICRC help.

In relation to the border clashes, the Cambodian authorities handed over to the Thai authorities a captured Thai soldier in the presence of the ICRC.

More detainees visited in Thailand

As a result of strengthened contacts with the armed forces in southern Thailand, security detainees held in relation to the situation there and visited by the ICRC included, for the first time, people detained in facilities run by the armed forces, in addition to those held in police stations and prisons run by the Ministry of Justice. This ministry also granted the ICRC access to places holding

CIVILIANS			CAMBODIA	LAO PDR	THAILAND
Economic security, water and habitat					
Food		Beneficiaries	7,136		91,000
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	7,136		91,000
Essential household items		Beneficiaries	7,136		91,000
		<i>of whom IDPs</i>	7,136		91,000
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives		Beneficiaries			35
Water and habitat activities		Beneficiaries		756	

other detainees, including irregular migrants, and first visits were conducted to two provincial prisons and the Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok. The authorities continued considering the ICRC's request for access to people detained in relation to the unrest in March–May 2010.

Over 6,520 detainees benefited from the donation of hygiene and sports items. Water supply improved for some 1,000 detainees in one prison in the south after the installation of an improved water storage system by the authorities, with ICRC support. Over 180 former security detainees received visits from delegates to assess their well-being after release.

Enhancing regional exchange, over 20 representatives from the Justice Ministries and central prison administrations of eight South-East Asian countries attended a four-day seminar on water and habitat in detention co-organized in Bangkok by the ICRC and the Ministry of Justice. The participants visited a prison and discussed topics such as national standards for prison infrastructure and lessons learnt from joint projects with the ICRC.

Detainees in Cambodia enjoy improved living conditions

The General Department of Prisons in Cambodia pursued efforts to cope with the increasing number of detainees accommodated in old and overcrowded prisons and to upgrade health services for inmates. To support this process, a report produced by an ICRC-hired consultant on the causes of the continuous growth in the prisoner population was handed over to the Ministries of Interior and Justice and the relevant judicial authorities in February. Subsequently, all stakeholders discussed the issues raised at two round-table meetings, leading to a constructive dialogue between the different authorities and their request to pursue such meetings in 2012.

Meanwhile, the General Department of Prisons health office, the Ministry of Health and NGOs working on health in prisons strengthened coordination, including in the fields of HIV/AIDS and TB, through ICRC-facilitated meetings. The most active partners set up a technical working group, further increasing their support. During a national seminar on health in prison settings, co-organized by the ICRC and the General Department of Prisons, over 170 representatives of government ministries, provincial authorities, international agencies and NGOs discussed achievements and agreed on the steps ahead through recommendations.

At working level, health staff from all prisons gained new expertise in TB and HIV/AIDS control at a week-long course supported by the ICRC. To improve public health, the authorities conducted a pilot hygiene-promotion campaign, including the provision of hygiene kits, for 1,100 detainees in two prisons. Some 7,000 detainees in six prisons underwent anti-scabies treatment and 300 detainees and staff in one prison benefited from a disinfection campaign. In all, over 9,100 detainees received hygiene kits.

Some 8,800 detainees in 16 prisons had infrastructure upgraded and maintained by General Department of Prisons engineers, including: the connection of three prisons to the city electricity networks and one to the city water network; the connection of sewage systems in three prisons to a new biotech septic tank system; and the renovation of kitchens in four prisons. Prison directors and other stakeholders received copies of the ICRC handbook and CD *Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Habitat in Prisons*, translated into Khmer.

Authorities receive help in response to the floods

In Thailand, some 1,000 detainees in two flood-affected prisons in the south received food and drinking water in March, while in October–December nearly 37,000 detainees and juveniles in 52 prisons and 4 juvenile centres in Bangkok and central and north-eastern Thailand received food and nearly 53,000 received hygiene kits and blankets. Some 30 prisons used pumps, generators and sandbags provided by the ICRC to keep the rising waters at bay. Detainees were also helped to contact their families.

In Cambodia, some 2,600 detainees and prison staff used ICRC emergency materials to help keep flood waters out of two prisons.

WOUNDED AND SICK

A total of 111 weapon-wounded patients from Myanmar seeking treatment in Thai hospitals, including 65 with mine-related injuries, had their medical costs covered by the ICRC.

Disabled persons in Cambodia access adequate treatment

While mines/ERW continued to be a threat for rural communities, survivors among the 60,000 recorded mine/ERW casualties and other physically disabled persons still required regular rehabilitative and/or medical care.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	CAMBODIA	THAILAND
ICRC visits		
Detainees visited	10,817	56,213
Detainees visited and monitored individually	40	594
	<i>of whom women</i>	2
Detainees newly registered	13	175
	<i>of whom women</i>	1
Number of visits carried out	38	50
Number of places of detention visited	20	29
Restoring family links		
RCMs collected	1	11
RCMs distributed	1	2
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		120
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		1

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	CAMBODIA	THAILAND
Economic security, water and habitat		
Food	Beneficiaries	39,581
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	9,139
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	8,855
		1,000

Some 10,600 disabled people had access to adequate treatment at the regional physical rehabilitation centres in Battambang and Kampong Speu. Both centres benefited from maintenance and renovation work. Their technicians improved patient treatment skills at training sessions, while heads of department developed their managerial skills under ICRC mentoring. The national orthopaedic component factory in Phnom Penh supplied all the necessary components for the 11 physical rehabilitation service providers in the country.

From the beginning of 2011, the Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation took over full responsibility for managing the two centres and the component factory, with continued ICRC financial and technical support, while strengthening its capacity to coordinate the physical rehabilitation sector at national level.

In cooperation with the ministry and the ICRC, Cambodian Red Cross branches played an active role in referring physically disabled people living in remote areas to the two centres. Outreach teams comprising prosthetists, orthotists and physiotherapists also carried out 176 field trips from Battambang and 97 trips from Kampong Speu, during which:

- ▶ 7,811 patients' conditions and needs were assessed
- ▶ 4,464 prostheses/orthoses and 644 wheelchairs were repaired
- ▶ 701 crutches and 225 wheelchairs were delivered
- ▶ 115 patients were referred to the 2 centres

Forty-two patients who received services in ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres were referred to NGOs working in the field of socio-economic reintegration and inclusion.

AUTHORITIES

During the border clashes, the Cambodian and Thai authorities were contacted by the ICRC and handed a *note verbale* reminding them of their obligations under IHL. Authorities in Thailand and the ICRC regularly focused their dialogue on the situation in the south, the respect due to civilians and the ICRC's mandate.

Events and contacts with government representatives in the region, including with staff of ASEAN national secretariats, aimed to encourage accession to or implementation of IHL treaties, to familiarize them with the ICRC and to gain their support.

Representatives of various Thai ministries discussed a future arms trade treaty at a workshop organized by the National Security Council in part facilitated by the ICRC. Other government officials, NGO members and academics discussed the International Criminal Court and the prosecution of IHL violations at the Fifth Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Lecture on IHL, organized by the Thai Foreign Ministry and the Thai Red Cross.

Some 70 Vietnamese officials from different ministries reaffirmed their commitment to accede to and comply with relevant treaties at a round-table held to review the conclusions of an ICRC-sponsored study on the compatibility of Vietnamese law with IHL.

In preparation for the 11th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention hosted in Cambodia, 25 representatives from 10 countries in East and South-East Asia discussed the human costs of anti-personnel landmines and the importance of adherence to the treaty at a seminar in Phnom Penh. Officials from all four countries covered attended a seminar on the 1977 Additional Protocols in Kyoto, Japan (see *Kuala Lumpur*).

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The Royal Thai Armed Forces continued to strengthen their capacity to teach IHL. With ICRC input, they produced an operational law handbook including information on respect for IHL and human rights during military operations. Their Peace Operations Centre introduced a training module on the subject. Participants in various regional military and peace-support exercises and training courses attended tailor-made ICRC presentations. A senior officer took part in the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations in South Africa (see *International law and cooperation*).

Further to regular ICRC operational dialogue with army and police forces, army units preparing for operations in northern and southern Thailand began to receive, as part of their predeployment training, regular ICRC briefings promoting compliance with international norms and standards. Similarly, 80 police officers discussed international policing standards, human rights and the ICRC at two workshops held in the south and one in Bangkok. The Royal Thai Police College integrated modules on international policing standards into its revised operating procedures and training courses.

Ties forged with the Cambodian National Police enabled the organization of three workshops at the Police Academy where some 50 generals and colonels, 50 prison guards and 500 newly recruited police officers learnt about international policing standards and human rights. Two senior police officials took part in the prison-overcrowding round-table process (see *People deprived of their freedom*).

In Viet Nam, 32 senior army officers attended an IHL instructor course held with ICRC support.

Renewed contact between the Lao PDR armed forces and the ICRC paved the way for further discussions on IHL promotion.

Periodic meetings with members of armed groups from Myanmar focused on respect for IHL, notably regarding the use of anti-personnel mines and the recruitment of children.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Media representatives took advantage of local (Bangkok, Vientiane) and regional (see *Philippines*) seminars on the Movement and reporting in time of conflict and of written and oral information to cover more widely National Society and ICRC activities in Cambodia, the Lao PDR and Thailand. They contributed directly to raising public awareness of humanitarian issues.

Community representatives, religious leaders, teachers and students in southern and northern Thailand and NGO staff working along the Thai-Myanmar border also increased their knowledge of the ICRC during bilateral meetings and dissemination sessions. Specific sessions targeted young people in schools in southern Thailand, raising their awareness of humanitarian principles. More material was produced in Thai and Yawi.

With some delay, the Thai Red Cross Youth Bureau and the Ministry of Education finalized the Exploring Humanitarian Law modules in Thai and held train-the-trainer and teacher-trainer workshops. The introduction of the programme in schools, followed by a national conference, was to take place in 2012.

Several events, organized in partnership with local institutions, encouraged IHL teaching at universities. Thus, two teams of students from two Thai universities took part in the regional IHL moot court competition in Hong Kong (see *Beijing*); a national IHL moot court competition was organized in Phnom Penh; and IHL seminars were held in Hanoi for 80 students and in Vientiane for 60 students.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The region's National Societies and the ICRC further strengthened their partnerships through joint activities to assist victims of violence and natural disaster and vulnerable communities, including restoring family links (see *Civilians* and *Wounded and sick*). They received ICRC financial and technical support for their communication programmes. They organized dissemination work for various audiences (see *Civil society*) and promotional and cultural events for World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May). They took an active part in the Movement statutory meetings in Geneva, Switzerland.

An International Federation/ICRC initiative to train Thai Red Cross trainers in basic Movement matters continued; another supported the Lao Red Cross strategic planning process.

The Cambodian Red Cross pursued its mine-risk reduction and education programme, with the support of the Australian and Norwegian Red Cross Societies. In Viet Nam, 26 government and Red Cross representatives in Quang Bin province attended training sessions aimed at reducing the impact of ERW. A joint Lao Red Cross/ICRC field survey carried out in Sepon, Savannakhet province, explored the needs arising from weapon contamination.

The Movement components active in the region held regular meetings to coordinate their activities.