

SUVA (regional)

COVERING: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and autonomous states, territories and colonies of the Pacific



EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)	
Protection	1,085
Assistance	-
Prevention	1,574
Cooperation with National Societies	1,048
General	-

► **3,706**

of which: Overheads 226

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	91%

PERSONNEL	
Expatriates	5
National staff (daily workers not included)	19

KEY POINTS

In 2011, the ICRC:

- with the National Society, provided assistance to 6,579 people displaced by tribal and intercommunity violence in Papua New Guinea
- initiated work with the Papua New Guinea authorities to improve detainees' living conditions on the basis of assessments conducted in 2010 in 6 prisons, complemented by further visits in 2011
- visited people deprived of their freedom in Fiji and Solomon Islands
- with Movement partners, helped the region's National Societies strengthen their capacities to respond to emergencies, restore family links, give first aid in situations of violence/emergencies and promote humanitarian principles
- advised on and welcomed, *inter alia*, Tuvalu's accession to the Mine Ban Convention, Cook Islands' adoption of a Cluster Munitions Convention Act and Vanuatu's accession to the Rome Statute
- promoted IHL and humanitarian principles and issues, including the protection of health care in armed conflict, to over 5,000 members of government and civil society in Australia and New Zealand

Since 2001, ICRC operations in the Pacific have been carried out by the Suva regional delegation. With the National Societies, it assists governments in ratifying and implementing IHL treaties and promotes respect for IHL among armed and security forces. It also promotes IHL and humanitarian issues among academic circles, the media and civil society. The ICRC visits people detained in connection with past unrest in Fiji and Solomon Islands and works to ensure that victims of armed violence in Papua New Guinea receive emergency aid and medical care. It also helps build National Societies' emergency response capacities.

CONTEXT

The Pacific region remained prone to the effects of frequent natural disasters, which left scores of people dead, wounded or evacuated and caused widespread damage to housing and infrastructure. These included heavy flooding in northern Australia; drought and fresh-water shortages in Tokelau and Tuvalu; and powerful earthquakes and aftershocks that shook New Zealand's South Island throughout 2011. The National Societies provided vital support and assistance to the many people affected.

Papua New Guinea remained affected by political instability at central level. Tribal and intercommunity violence, in some areas exacerbated by the development of a giant liquid natural gas extraction project, continued to plague many parts of the heavily populated Highland provinces and occasionally erupted in urban centres, causing casualties, the destruction of homes and livelihoods, and internal population displacement. In Bougainville, armed groups were more visibly present, affecting the daily lives of communities until a ceasefire was signed in the presence of government and UN representatives in December.

Elsewhere in the region, the state of emergency was lifted in the Tongan capital, and the Fijian government announced the removal of the Public Emergency Regulations and the launch of a nationwide consultation process in early 2012 aimed at drawing up a new constitution. After completing public hearings, the Solomon Islands' Truth and Reconciliation Commission investigating the 1998–2003 violence received a list of 146 related deaths and conducted its first exhumations.

Papua New Guinea and Tonga joined Australia and New Zealand in providing troops for overseas peacekeeping operations and the international coalition in Afghanistan.

The Australian government remained active in supporting international rules-based global and regional frameworks. It maintained a strong international engagement on humanitarian issues, including the development of IHL, and the facilitation of improved civil-military interaction, while reviewing and progressively increasing its aid budget.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

With the support of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, the ICRC continued to assess the needs of and deliver emergency relief assistance to people affected by tribal or intercommunity disputes in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. The needs of people

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits				
			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		1,385		
Detainees visited and monitored individually		34		
Number of visits carried out		15		
Number of places of detention visited		15		
Restoring family links				
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		50		

Main figures and indicators	ASSISTANCE	Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)¹				
Economic security, water and habitat				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	6,579	50%	
Health				
Health centres supported	Structures	5		
Average catchment population		2,000		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security, water and habitat²				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	2,478		
WOUNDED AND SICK				
Hospitals¹				
Hospitals supported	Structures	4		

1. Papua New Guinea

2. Fiji, Papua New Guinea

living the consequences of past ethnic tensions in Bougainville also started to be identified.

ICRC delegates conducted annual visits to people detained in connection with past unrest in Fiji and Solomon Islands and shared their findings with the relevant authorities. In Papua New Guinea, they revisited people in three prisons and assessed the situation of inmates in three additional ones for the first time. In all three countries, detainees received basic assistance. In Papua New Guinea, following an assessment of general living conditions in six prisons in late 2010, a dialogue was initiated with the authorities to address the root causes of deficiencies identified, and work started on improving water and hygiene conditions in one prison.

Cooperation with the region's National Societies and the International Federation remained a priority for the Suva delegation, which participated in several partnership meetings and joint projects with Movement components active in the Pacific. It focused its financial and technical support on the Red Cross Societies of Cook Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu in order to boost their capacities in the fields of emergency preparedness, first aid in situations of violence and emergencies, restoring family links in disaster situations, and the promotion of humanitarian principles.

The region's governments continued to receive ICRC technical advice in ratifying and implementing IHL treaties. The ICRC welcomed the progress made towards ratification and implementation of several treaties, notably in Australia, Cook Islands, Palau, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The ICRC conducted predeployment training on IHL and other international standards for Australian, New Zealand and Tongan troops engaged in armed conflicts and peacekeeping operations abroad and for members of the Papua New Guinea defence forces awaiting deployment with the UN in Sudan. Papua New Guinean police recruits learnt about respect for human rights in law enforcement and the ICRC and received adapted versions of the ICRC's *To Serve and To Protect* booklet.

The ICRC's close working relations with government departments and representatives of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific islands enabled presentations and workshops to be held on IHL and the ICRC's mandate and activities and on issues such as the protection of health care in armed conflict and the protection of civilians. The ICRC continued to highlight neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action and concerns in all key debates in the region. Events centering on these issues also helped the organization nurture cooperation with the media, academics and civil society.

CIVILIANS

Extended networking enabled the ICRC to build its knowledge of the complex causes and effects of tribal warfare in Papua New Guinea. Multidisciplinary assessments conducted with the Papua New Guinea Red Cross in areas affected by tribal or inter-community clashes in the Highlands and past ethnic tensions in Bougainville revealed high levels of insecurity and needs, especially in the fields of health care, first aid and hygiene.

Some 6,489 people (1,184 households) in the Highland areas of Sumi, Bulolo and Margarima and in the coastal town of Lae were thus able to improve their living conditions with the help of emergency shelter materials and household items supplied by ICRC/National Society teams. In Bougainville, 90 people (18 households) received relief items following an inter-village dispute. Violence-affected communities in central and southern Bougainville gained access to better health care following the provision of medical items and some logistical support to five health clinics and four hospitals. Fifteen communities in both the Highlands and Bougainville received basic first-aid kits.

At the same time, the authorities were reminded through ICRC representations of their duty to do their utmost to protect civilians from violence, intimidation or harassment, to ensure that the needs of displaced communities were met and to prevent forced displacements. A dialogue was initiated with the Papua New Guinea police regarding appropriate use of force during operations, and efforts were made to persuade armed groups to allow

unhindered access to health care for the inhabitants of villages in southern Bougainville and in the Highlands.

In Solomon Islands, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission received ICRC forensic advice on exhuming and managing human remains from past ethnic tensions. The families of missing persons talked about their needs in a meeting with the ICRC. With ICRC/National Society support, four families attended the exhumation of their loved ones and repatriated and buried their remains.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The Papua New Guinea authorities and the ICRC initiated a dialogue to address the root causes of deficiencies in the treatment and living conditions of inmates, based on the findings of an assessment conducted in six prisons in the Highlands in late 2010. Within this framework, joint steps were taken to improve water and hygiene conditions in one prison, including through the provision of an emergency water supply; a representative of the Correctional Services attended a regional ICRC symposium in Bangkok on water and sanitation in detention (see *Thailand*); and 125 new prison staff were briefed on the ICRC's work and mandate and its standard procedures for visits. At year's end, detainees in three of the prisons assessed in 2010 and three additional ones in other parts of the country benefited from further ICRC visits, carried out according to the organization's standard procedures, and the findings were shared with the authorities. The inmates (1,278) in one prison received health and recreational items.

Similarly, people held in connection with past unrest in Fiji and Solomon Islands continued to receive ICRC visits, and the relevant authorities were provided with confidential feedback. Some 1,200 detainees in Fiji received hygiene, cooking and recreational items as necessary.

In Solomon Islands, 50 detainees held in Honiara received visits from family members living on outlying islands, organized with ICRC/National Society support. Two foreign nationals previously visited in Papua New Guinea established contact with their consulates with the ICRC's help.

The Palau authorities and the ICRC pursued dialogue on the six resettled former inmates of the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, whom the ICRC visited again in 2011.

AUTHORITIES

Bilateral relations with governments in the region and multilateral relations, including with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, offered opportunities to promote IHL and humanitarian issues. Progress achieved included the provision by the ICRC of model laws, comments on draft legislation and other legal advice. For example: Samoa implemented the Chemical Weapons Convention; Tuvalu acceded to the Mine Ban Convention and submitted a combined Geneva Conventions and Red Cross Society bill to

parliament; Cook Islands adopted a Cluster Munitions Convention Act, amended the Geneva Conventions Act to include Additional Protocol III, and set up a national IHL committee; Vanuatu acceded to the Rome Statute; Fiji issued an implementing decree on the Biological Weapons and Mine Ban Conventions; and the Australian parliament initiated debate on cluster munitions legislation, on which the ICRC had made recommendations. Pacific government officials discussed contemporary issues, such as international and national provisions for the punishment of war crimes and the strengthening of legal protection for victims of armed conflict, at the 3rd Commonwealth Red Cross and Red Crescent IHL Conference in Malaysia (see *Jakarta*).

Relations between the Australian government and the ICRC were strengthened through active cooperation around the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent; discussions with senior officials on global humanitarian and IHL developments; operational and strategic dialogue with the armed forces; and Australia's support, in particular financial, for the ICRC. In Australia and New Zealand, government departments, the military and NGOs discussed with the ICRC and, where relevant, the National Societies the issues of neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action, protection of civilians, protection of health care in conflict, and humanitarian-military relations. Over 800 government, military and civil society representatives from the Asia-Pacific region increased their awareness of the ICRC's position on the above matters at several events organized by Australia's Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence and by branches of the Australian government.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The Australian armed forces at various levels and the ICRC pursued a regular and constructive dialogue on IHL-related and operational issues (see *Authorities*). Over 1,000 officers from Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga attending command and staff colleges and training centres, or engaged in armed conflicts or peacekeeping operations abroad, learnt more about their obligations under IHL and the ICRC's mandate and activities.

Police recruits in Papua New Guinea received 2,000 adapted copies of the ICRC's *To Serve and To Protect* booklet in preparation for law enforcement duties during general elections in 2012. For the first time in the country, some 240 new recruits attended an ICRC dissemination session.

A dialogue on the protection of the civilian population and safe access for ICRC and National Society workers was initiated with armed groups and home guards in southern Bougainville and tribal weapon-bearers in the Highlands.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The Australian and New Zealand media used ICRC materials to raise public awareness of the humanitarian impact of conflict and the ICRC's work around the world. Journalists interviewed

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	FIJI	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	SOLOMON ISLANDS
ICRC visits			
Detainees visited	8	1,327	50
Detainees visited and monitored individually	7		27
Number of visits carried out	7	6	2
Number of places of detention visited	7	6	2
Restoring family links			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support			50

programme specialists and attended events including an international conference on reporting on violence (see *Philippines*). Australian media representatives received IHL training organized by the National Society.

Links forged between Australian think-tanks, NGOs and universities and the ICRC helped foster specialist and public debate on issues including the protection of civilians, humanitarian-military affairs, health care in armed conflict and humanitarian action. Contacts initiated with various cultural and religious communities and academics aimed to seek support for ICRC operations in the Pacific and beyond. In New Zealand, academics and civil society representatives discussed the protection of humanitarian workers at a National Society conference.

Nearly 750,000 people learnt about the need for increased protection of health care in armed conflict and other situations of violence through four “Health Care in Danger” events in Australia and related media coverage. This campaign will continue thanks to partnerships forged with universities, the government and the National Society.

Law students from Australia and New Zealand tested their skills at the 9th Red Cross IHL Moot for the Asia-Pacific region, held in Hong Kong (see *Beijing*). The University of the South Pacific worked with the ICRC to produce a study guide and handbook on conflicts in the Pacific and applicable law and customs, based on the ICRC’s *Under the Protection of the Palm* booklet.

In Papua New Guinea, community representatives, religious leaders and academics discussed the causes and effects of tribal warfare in the Highlands at two ICRC-sponsored seminars. Dissemination material illustrated by local art students and conveying humanitarian messages was widely distributed.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The 12 Pacific island National Societies, together with the American, Australian, French, Japanese and New Zealand Red Cross Societies, developed a common understanding of humanitarian priorities, challenges and responses at a partnership meeting organized by the International Federation and the ICRC. Pacific States’ participation in the 31st International Conference increased dramatically as a result of common preparatory work by the main Movement partners working in the region.

The National Societies continued to develop their peer-to-peer training approach and tools to strengthen governance and leadership roles and responsibilities through the Pacific Enhancement Working Group, and the first training sessions took place for the Australian, Cook Islands and Vanuatu Red Cross Societies.

In Papua New Guinea, 21 Red Cross staff and volunteers received training in conducting needs assessments in situations of violence. They took part in assessing the needs of populations affected by tribal violence in the Highlands (see *Civilians*).

With ICRC support, seven of the region’s National Societies promoted knowledge of IHL and the Movement. IHL handbooks for parliamentarians were produced for Solomon Islands (with the Australian Red Cross), Cook Islands (with the National Society) and Samoa. Twenty-one Samoa Red Cross Society volunteers and staff attended an Australian Red Cross/ICRC refresher course on restoring family links. The New Zealand Red Cross trained

National Society members in Solomon Islands in providing first aid in situations of violence.

Cooperation between the Australian Red Cross and the ICRC expanded. In addition to giving presentations to over 1,000 National Society staff, members and volunteers, the ICRC provided technical support for IHL instructor courses, specialist workshops and publications, and shared protection expertise on conducting monitoring visits to detained migrants.