Having established a presence in Thailand in 1975 to support its operations in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, the ICRC promotes the ratification and implementation of IHL treaties and IHL integration into military training regionwide. It raises awareness of humanitarian issues and supports National Societies in developing their capacities in IHL promotion, family-links services and emergency response. It seeks to protect/assist vulnerable populations in Thailand and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, visits detainees in Thailand and in Cambodia, where it supports the authorities in improving prison management, and helps meet the need for assistive/mobility devices.
After taking over the Thai government in May 2014, the military established the National Council for Peace and Order, ending months of anti-government protests. It is working towards reforming the country’s political system, which includes the formation of a new government; elections are planned for October 2015.

With peace negotiations between the government and the insurgency at a standstill, violent incidents in Thailand’s southern border provinces continue unabated and causing civilian deaths and injuries. Emergency regulations remain in place and continue to affect people’s daily lives.

As a result of sporadic clashes between the Myanmar government and ethnic groups along the Thailand-Myanmar border and intercommunal violence in other parts of Myanmar, people are crossing over into Thailand in search of safety.

Unresolved political, social and economic issues in Cambodia lead to demonstrations or outbreaks of violence, causing injuries and arrests.

In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (hereafter Lao PDR), mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to threaten the welfare of communities.

Viet Nam is dealing with territorial disputes over parts of the South China Sea.

**MAIN TARGETS FOR 2015**

- through seminars on prison health care, facilities and management, the region’s authorities recognize the ICRC’s expertise in such matters, including Lao and Vietnamese officials who engage in dialogue on ICRC access to their prisons
- detainees in Cambodian and Thai prisons benefit from concrete efforts made by the authorities, with ICRC support, to address the effects of overcrowding, notably improvements to health-care services and infrastructure
- heads of vulnerable households affected by the violence in southern Thailand generate income through micro-economic initiatives, which include training and equipment, provided by the ICRC
- in the southern Lao People’s Democratic Republic, people reduce risks associated with weapon contamination thanks to water facilities installed near their homes, while victims earn income through livestock-raising input/training
- disabled persons in Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic receive rehabilitative care from ICRC-supported centres, including through outreach programmes and repairs to devices for people in remote areas
- the authorities, weapon bearers and civil society actors throughout the region discuss with the ICRC topics of common concern, such as peacekeeping, weapon contamination and integration of IHL into university curricula

**CONTEXT**

After taking over the Thai government in May 2014, the military established the National Council for Peace and Order, ending months of anti-government protests. It is working towards reforming the country’s political system, which includes the formation of a new government; elections are planned for October 2015.

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**HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

In 2015, the Bangkok regional delegation will focus on detention-related activities and on assisting victims of past and ongoing conflicts and other situations of violence. It will also endeavour to raise understanding of and support for humanitarian principles, IHL and the ICRC’s activities throughout the region.

In Cambodia and Thailand, the ICRC will continue to visit detainees according to its standard procedures, paying particular attention to persons detained for security reasons and to irregular migrants. It will discuss with the authorities concerned its findings/recommendations on detainees’ treatment and living conditions, including the link between Thai anti-drug policies and prison overpopulation. Measures, primarily enhancing infrastructure and health-care services, will be carried out with the authorities to address the consequences of overcrowding in places where the ICRC regularly visits detainees; these aim to encourage the authorities to replicate such activities elsewhere. The ICRC will organize seminars/events and hold bilateral dialogue with the authorities throughout the region. On such occasions, it will share its experience in detention-related matters and, in the Lao PDR and Viet Nam, hold discussions on possible ICRC access to detainees.

Whenever possible with the region’s National Societies, the ICRC will strive to assist victims of conflicts or other situations of violence, including by enabling family members separated by these circumstances, detention, migration and disasters to keep in touch. Various kinds of ICRC support will help the National Societies expand their capacities to deliver these services.

Violence-affected households in southern Thailand and victims of mines/ERW in the Lao PDR will receive material assistance and training from the ICRC to help them start/resume livelihood activities. In the Lao PDR, the installation of water facilities close to homes in mine/ERW-affected areas will help people stay safe. The ICRC will also help develop the emergency medical services of a Lao organization in charge of mine clearance.

Treatment costs for people wounded during clashes in Myanmar and seeking care in Thai hospitals will be covered by the ICRC. The organization will likewise help improve surgical care for the weapon-affected by conducting seminars for medical professionals in northern and southern Thailand.

The ICRC will expand its assistance to disabled persons in the Lao PDR by assuming responsibility for three physical rehabilitation centres. It will maintain its support to two centres and one components factory in Cambodia, focus-
help family members separated as a result of previous conflicts, other situations of violence, detention, migration or natural/man-made disasters restore/maintain contact

Objective
- where appropriate, help unaccompanied minors deported from neighbouring countries and other vulnerable people reunite with their families; direct them to organizations offering social reintegration support
- facilitate micro-economic initiatives for:
  - some 100 heads of the most vulnerable households in southern Thailand, including by providing training and equipment, to help them generate income (benefiting 400 people); refer other victims of violence to existing services
  - around 20 disabled persons in Cambodia to help ease their social and economic reintegration
- in the Lao PDR, train and equip members of the National Society and/or other partner organizations to help expand their capacities to implement water and economic security projects and to address/mitigate the effects of weapon contamination; adapt the National Society/ICRC economic security strategy, based on a needs assessment and the authorities’ recommendations
- With the Lao Red Cross:
  - in the southern Lao PDR:
    - help around 50 disabled persons, primarily heads of households who are victims of mines/ERW, improve their livelihoods (benefiting some 250 people) by providing livestock and vocational training
    - in coordination with local partners, install water facilities close to the homes of at least 1,000 people affected by weapon contamination, enabling them to cover their household and agricultural/livestock water needs; promote community hygiene practices and the maintenance of facilities among some 200 of them
  - train and equip medics of the clearance teams of UXO Lao, the national mine-clearance operator; provide UXO Lao with technical advice/expertise to revise its first-aid training curriculum, enabling it to explore cooperation activities with emergency medical service providers

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Many of the detainees in Thailand are held on drug-related charges; others are detained for security reasons, including the violence in the south. Thais held far from their homes and foreigners find it difficult to maintain contact with relatives.

According to reports, the prison population in Thailand and in Viet Nam is increasing; however, in Cambodia, the number of detainees has decreased for two years in a row. Despite the authorities’ efforts, overcrowding remains a severe problem in these countries. It stretches the already limited capacities of staff and infrastructure and results in inadequate living conditions and services, especially health care.

In the Lao PDR, detainees are held under the Public Security Ministry.

Objective
- Detainees are treated humanely, their living conditions comply with internationally recognized standards, they have access to an appropriate level of health care, and their basic judicial guarantees are respected.
Plan of action and indicators
Protection
▶ in Cambodia and Thailand, visit detainees according to standard ICRC procedures, checking that their treatment and living conditions conform to internationally recognized standards and paying particular attention to security detainees and migrants; discuss findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities concerned, including, in Cambodia, the treatment of people during the initial stages of detention
▶ develop dialogue with the Lao and Vietnamese Public Security Ministries on possible areas of cooperation in detention and on visits to detainees according to standard ICRC procedures; reinforce discussions in the Lao PDR by making use of the results of previous ICRC assistance projects at 2 facilities
▶ to support the authorities in tackling detention-related issues:
  ▪ sponsor Lao, Thai and Vietnamese officials’ participation in a regional seminar on prison management
  ▪ discuss with the Thai authorities the apparent link between anti-drug policies and overcrowded prisons, with a view to helping them reduce population growth
  ▪ in Cambodia, continue to facilitate up to 3 round-tables that bring together various parties concerned to discuss and/or reinforce steps to curb overcrowding
  ▪ organize a health in detention seminar for prison/health officials in Viet Nam
▶ with the Thai Red Cross, help local and foreign detainees stay in touch with relatives through tracing and RCM services; enable security detainees, including those held outside their provinces of origin, to receive family visits

Assistance
Cambodia and Thailand
▶ help ease detainees’ living conditions by distributing hygiene and recreational items
▶ help the authorities concerned boost health-care delivery by:
  ▪ in Cambodia, offering technical support to the health office of the General Department of Prisons (GDP) in managing its services, including through the revival of a technical working group; encouraging the Health Ministry to take greater part in national policy discussions on health care
  ▪ in Thailand, encouraging meetings between the Health Ministry and Department of Corrections (DOC); sponsoring officials’ participation in an international workshop; co-organizing with stakeholders an annual seminar on key health issues in prisons
▶ with the above-mentioned authorities, enable detainees to maintain or improve their health by:
  ▪ supporting medical screening at 3 Thai prisons through the provision of medical supplies/equipment and financial incentives for clinic staff
  ▪ following up ailing inmates regularly visited by the ICRC, principally at 6 Cambodian and 3 Thai facilities, and referring them to health services within or outside prison
  ▪ providing infrastructural and material support to 2 Cambodian prison clinics serving some 1,600 detainees – under a pilot project launched in 2014, primarily to treat scabies
  ▪ promoting hygiene practices among them and the staff at up to 3 prisons to help reduce the spread of disease
  ▪ through material support and training, including in information management, help the GDP and the DOC boost their capacities to construct and maintain infrastructure; with other stakeholders, enable the GDP to lobby for a suitable budget and to draft construction plans for 2 new prisons
▶ with the GDP and the DOC, enhance detainees’ living conditions by:
  ▪ rehabilitating infrastructure in several prisons across Cambodia to enable around 6,000 people to have access to supplies of safe water and functioning sanitation facilities and some 2,500 to benefit from improved common areas
  ▪ improving water supply facilities for approximately 12,000 inmates at 5 prisons and immigration detention centres in Thailand
▶ as a participant in the coordinating group of the Asian Conference of Correctional Facilities, Architects and Planners, provide member countries with technical expertise on good practices related to infrastructure

WOUNDED AND SICK
People injured during clashes or by mines/ERW in Myanmar have difficulties in obtaining proper health care, so they cross the border into Thailand. Violence in southern Thailand results in injuries that the medical professionals concerned are not always properly trained to treat.

The number of mine/ERW victims in Cambodia is reported to be declining, but there are still many survivors who require rehabilitative care and assistance in social reintegration.

According to reports, previous conflicts and accidents are the main cause of disability in the Lao PDR. Numerous organizations provide rehabilitative services, but they are occasionally hindered by financial constraints.

Objective
People injured along the Thailand-Myanmar border or in southern Thailand receive adequate treatment in Thailand. Amputees in Cambodia and the Lao PDR have access to adequate rehabilitation services.

Plan of action and indicators
Assistance
Thailand
▶ cover the cost of treatment, as well as of assistive devices, in Thai hospitals for up to 50 weapon-wounded patients from Myanmar
▶ with the Thai Red Cross, help Thai surgeons and health-care professionals become more skilful in performing emergency surgery, by conducting 1 seminar each in northern and southern Thailand

Physical rehabilitation
Cambodia
▶ partially fund the national factory’s production of some 13,000 prosthetic/orthotic components and 4,300 walking aids for the country’s 11 physical rehabilitation cen-
tresses and the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics

- to ensure that some 12,000 disabled people have access to and benefit from good-quality services at 2 ICRC-supported rehabilitation centres:
  - provide material/financial support for the production of around 1,670 prostheses, 1,450 orthoses and 600 wheelchairs
  - support outreach services, including repairs to devices, for some 9,000 patients in remote areas
  - cover patients’ accommodation, food and travel costs
- enable the supported facilities to become operationally and financially self-sufficient by:
  - offering technical expertise/advice to managers and prosthetic/orthotic technicians; sponsoring their advanced training
  - helping the national factory sell its components on the local market
- increase awareness of the needs of the disabled and help facilitate patients’ social reintegration by:
  - enabling some 40 female patients to train/compete through a wheelchair basketball team organized by a local ICRC-supported NGO
  - providing livelihood assistance (see Civilians)

Lao PDR

- boost the quality of rehabilitative care of 3 centres by providing staff with material/financial and/or technical support for producing devices and managing operations
- with the National Society and a Health Ministry-supported organization, conduct communication campaigns and outreach activities to help patients in remote areas learn about and benefit from services at the supported centres

**ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

Throughout the region, political authorities have an incomplete understanding of the issues that require a humanitarian response; consequently, implementation of IHL-related legal instruments is minimal. Multilateral/regional bodies, notably ASEAN, and academic circles influence the discussion of humanitarian issues and the development of national policies.

The armed forces and police are in charge of internal and external security, including during economic and political protests, which sometimes turn violent. Community/religious leaders in southern Thailand can directly, or, through their networks, encourage those involved in the fighting to protect civilians.

Armed groups in Myanmar play a role in ensuring the safety of those not taking part in the clashes (see Context).

Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam send contingents to peacekeeping missions abroad.

**Objective**

The authorities, including regional bodies, armed and police forces and all other weapon bearers know and respect IHL, other relevant norms and internationally recognized standards protecting people in situations of violence, and incorporate these into their decision-making processes. The media, religious/community leaders and other circles of influence help foster awareness of humanitarian issues and rules among those involved and the wider public, thus achieving greater respect for human dignity. All actors understand the ICRC’s mandate and support its work.

**Plan of action and indicators**

**Prevention**

- to deepen awareness of and gain support for humanitarian principles, IHL and the ICRC’s neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action, as well as for the goals of the Health Care in Danger project:
  - hold bilateral dialogue with and dissemination sessions/events for the authorities, representatives of political parties/NGOs/think-tanks/academia and community/religious leaders and members, particularly in southern Thailand
  - with other Movement components, participate in/or organize discussions and events by/for multilateral organizations and the ASEAN departments of Foreign Affairs Ministries on topics such as disaster management, peacekeeping and weapon contamination
  - work with the media and maintain a website in Thai, thus promoting humanitarian affairs to the public; using virtual technology tools, produce promotional/training materials adapted to the local culture/language
  - encourage understanding of IHL, other relevant norms and internationally recognized policing standards, especially on the use of force, and the integration of these norms/standards into weapon bearers’ training and operations by enabling senior military and police officers to attend national/international events, and by:
    - conducting workshops/briefings on standards governing law enforcement for police officers, senior Thai military officials and troops assigned to southern Thailand
    - offering training courses to armed forces’ operational staff, jointly organizing a regional seminar on naval warfare with the Royal Thai Navy
    - organizing training, supplemented by informational materials, for armed groups along the Thailand-Myanmar border, with a view to securing inclusion of the principles of distinction and the prohibition against laying mines in their codes of conduct
    - briefing Cambodian, Thai and Vietnamese units participating in UN peacekeeping missions
  - support governments in acceding to major IHL and weapon-related treaties and in integrating provisions into domestic legislation by offering them technical advice and:
    - enabling ministry officials and members of the judiciary to participate in national and international IHL-related events
    - supporting the Cambodian authorities in establishing an ASEAN regional mine-action centre
    - discussing the status of the Red Cross Act and the need to respect the Movement’s emblems with Thai government officials
  - stimulate interest in IHL among future leaders and promote its integration into university curricula by:
- sponsoring academics to attend workshops/seminars abroad; supporting 1 lecturer per country in acquiring IHL expertise
- donating reference materials to institutions
- enabling university students to attend national and regional events/competitions

**RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The region’s National Societies are the ICRC’s partners in addressing humanitarian needs. They are working in environments where respect for the Fundamental Principles is crucial.

**Objective**
The region’s National Societies have a strong legal basis for independent action. They are able to carry out their core activities effectively. The activities of all components of the Movement are coordinated.

**Plan of action and indicators**

**Cooperation**
- provide technical/material/financial support for National Societies to help them boost their capacities to:
  - assist, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles and the Safer Access Framework, vulnerable people during emergencies or situations of violence, separated family members and people affected by mines/ERW (see Civilians)
  - promote humanitarian principles
- provide the Lao Red Cross technical advice/expertise to revise its statutes
- coordinate activities with other Movement components in the region through regular meetings and regional events