

NEPAL



ICRC / AR, 2013
 + ICRC delegation + ICRC office ▲ ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

The ICRC initially worked in Nepal out of its regional delegation in New Delhi, opening a delegation in Kathmandu in 2001. Since the May 2006 agreement between the government and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, the ICRC has focused on: helping clarify the fate of missing persons and supporting their families; promoting full compliance with IHL; and improving medical care for the wounded and physical rehabilitation services for those in need. It works closely with and helps the Nepal Red Cross Society strengthen its operational capacities.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2013:

- ▶ the authorities were encouraged to clarify the fate of persons missing in connection with past conflict, while in 25 districts, families of missing persons received support through a Nepal Red Cross Society/ICRC/NGO project
- ▶ forensic workers and officers from the Armed Police Force (APF) and the Nepal Police (NP) enhanced their ability to manage data on missing persons and human remains with National Society/ICRC support
- ▶ people injured during unrest/natural disasters received care from trained National Society and security forces first-responders, while over 60 medical specialists honed their emergency room trauma-management skills at courses
- ▶ cooperation with the Nepalese Army in IHL training for its officers resumed, while training on international human rights law for APF and NP officers took place on an ad hoc basis
- ▶ the National Society strengthened its emergency response capacities – particularly in the run-up to elections – by integrating its volunteers into district disaster-response teams countrywide and training first-responders

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)	
Protection	661
Assistance	1,184
Prevention	766
Cooperation with National Societies	407
General	-

3,018

of which: Overheads 184

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	75%

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	5
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	67

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

HIGH

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	41
RCMs distributed	43
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	29
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	56
RCMs distributed	31

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	3,725
Cash	Beneficiaries	4,366
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	6
WOUNDED AND SICK		
Hospitals		
Hospitals supported	Structures	36
Physical rehabilitation		
Centres supported	Structures	2
Patients receiving services	Patients	1,371

CONTEXT

The absorption of former members of the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) into the Nepalese Army was officially completed, but progress in the peace process remained slow. Nepal, without a legislative body since May 2012, was mired in a constitutional and political crisis. Elections for a new Constituent Assembly took place in November; they were conducted by the Interim Election Council, which acted as a caretaker government following the resignation of the coalition government in March. The formation of a new government was envisaged for 2014.

The absence of a fully functioning political apparatus slowed down reform and the adoption of a unified bill on the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms. The Ordinance on Investigation of Disappeared Persons, Truth and Reconciliation Commission was issued by presidential decree, but it remained pending at the Supreme Court, as its provisions were challenged by various parties.

Countrywide protests and strikes persisted alongside political unrest and intercommunal tensions. They remained limited in scale, although violent incidents intensified in the run-up to the elections. Explosive remnants of war (ERW) from the past conflict and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) linked to criminality or election-related violence endangered lives.

The country had to endure a number of natural disasters.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC, together with its main partner, the Nepal Red Cross Society, continued to assist people suffering from the residual effects of past conflict, while monitoring and responding to the humanitarian needs of people affected by present unrest and natural disasters.

The organization kept up comprehensive efforts to help ascertain the fate of almost 1,400 persons missing in connection with the past conflict. The ICRC, together with trained National Society volunteers, compiled and verified information on missing persons gathered from their families, and submitted it to the former parties to the conflict, with a view to clarifying the fate of these persons. National Society staff/volunteers served as primary contacts with the families and kept them abreast of developments. As there was no national mechanism that comprehensively addressed the needs of the families of missing persons, the ICRC encouraged the authorities to take measures to alleviate their suffering. National Society/ICRC help facilitated financial assistance – through the government's interim relief programme – for families.

The families of missing persons had access – through a project run with the National Society and local partners – to comprehensive support for their psychosocial, legal and economic needs. The Nepalese Red Cross and partner NGOs recruited and trained community volunteers, some of whom were themselves relatives of missing persons, to facilitate peer support group meetings and provide individual counselling for the families. A 2012 review showed that the project had markedly improved the well-being of beneficiary families; it was therefore expanded to 10 districts, benefiting 746 families in total. Forensic support for the authorities and other relevant actors – for instance, donation of ante/post-mortem data-management software for the Institute of Medicine – aimed to facilitate exhumations and help resolve cases of missing persons.

In addition to promoting safe access to medical care for wounded people, the ICRC provided hospitals with ad hoc medical supplies, ensuring that people injured during internal disturbances or natural disasters received timely and appropriate treatment. It also supported the National Society's first-aid and ambulance services, and the integration of additional volunteers into district disaster-response teams countrywide. First-aid and human remains management training for National Society staff/volunteers and Armed Police Force (APF) and Nepal Police (NP) instructors/officers helped build up local capacities. To the same end, doctors and medical students attended emergency room trauma-management courses, conducted with local instructors. To address the needs of disabled people, including conflict-amputees, the ICRC supported two physical rehabilitation centres, including through staff training. National Society risk-education sessions helped prevent further casualties among communities in mine/ERW-contaminated areas.

Though the political situation hampered IHL-treaty accession and domestic IHL implementation, the national IHL committee, with ICRC support, prepared documents to guide the pertinent authorities in advancing such processes. The 22nd South Asia Teaching Session on IHL, hosted with the Kathmandu School of Law, enabled the sharing of best practices in IHL implementation. The ICRC maintained dialogue with the armed/security forces on incorporating IHL and other applicable law in their doctrine, training and operations. It resumed cooperation with the Nepalese Army after a two-year gap, leading to the organization of various training courses for officers, some of whom were preparing for deployment abroad. Although cooperation with them had not yet been formalized, the APF and the NP included sessions on IHL and international norms applicable to law enforcement in their training courses, on an ad hoc basis. Discussions with influential members of civil society, including the media, raised public awareness of humanitarian concerns and the Movement's work.

The National Society boosted its emergency capacities and pursued organizational development with ICRC support. Movement components met regularly to coordinate their activities.

CIVILIANS

Bearing in mind the prevailing political uncertainty and the country's susceptibility to natural disasters, the ICRC reminded the authorities of their obligations to meet the basic needs of civilians affected and to permit them to have access to medical care (see *Wounded and sick*). ICRC support helped the Nepalese Red Cross boost its emergency response capacities. The National Society integrated 100 additional trained volunteers in disaster-response teams in 37 districts. It distributed essential household items to 3,725 victims of natural disasters such as landslides and floods.

Families ascertain the fate of missing relatives

Families were still seeking 1,359 relatives missing in connection with the past conflict, which ended in 2006. Information on missing persons collected from the families and verified by the National Society/ICRC was submitted to the former parties to the conflict – the security forces and the PLA – with a view to clarifying their fate. National Society/ICRC teams also cross-checked data against publicly available records, such as a voters' register and a list of missing persons drawn up by NGOs/international organizations dealing with the issue. In the process, 45 new cases of missing persons were registered – including 3 women and 11 others who were minors at the time of disappearance – and

the fate of 29 people ascertained: among them, 3 were found alive and the graves of 2 others located, giving closure to their families, who visited the graves with ICRC support. An updated list of people who remained unaccounted for was published on the ICRC's family-links website (familylinks.icrc.org). Attestations confirming the deaths of 21 persons provided closure to their families and enabled them to access government benefits/compensation.

The Nepalese Red Cross, primarily in charge of maintaining contact with the families of missing persons, did so through a pool of 245 trained staff/volunteers, who visited the families regularly, informed them of developments concerning the fate of their relatives and helped facilitate their access to government benefits (see below).

Families of missing persons access support for various needs

While waiting for information on the whereabouts of their missing relatives, 746 families (4,295 people) in 25 districts received assistance for their psychosocial, legal and economic needs within the framework of a comprehensive support project launched in 2010 and implemented with the National Society and partner NGOs. The families included 272 households in 10 districts to which the project was extended after a 2012 review of its implementation in one district demonstrated a marked improvement in the families' psychological well-being. Under the project, families coped with their situation through peer support/other activities facilitated by trained community volunteers for 41 groups of mothers, wives and fathers. Among these volunteers were 35 who had been recruited when the project was expanded; some of them were relatives of missing persons. About 170 people had individual consultations with trained counsellors; nine people with mental health disorders were referred for professional treatment, the costs of which were covered. Around 100 people benefited from legal/administrative assistance and 38 from vocational training, owing to referrals by partners/the ICRC. Adolescents learnt life skills during National Society/ICRC training sessions. The holding of commemorative events and construction of memorials fostered communities' understanding of issues related to missing persons and reduced the stigma attached to them.

During interviews, 348 families in nine districts where the project ended by year's end confirmed the strengthening of their ability to function, at individual, family and community levels.

Families receive government assistance

As there was still no national mechanism that comprehensively addressed the needs of families of missing persons, the ICRC encouraged the authorities to take measures to alleviate their suffering. A report on the ten-year effort by the National Society/ICRC to resolve issues related to missing persons was not yet ready; however, an updated publication on missing persons in Nepal was issued.

With National Society/ICRC help, families received financial support under the government's interim relief programme. To date, of the 1,359 cases registered by the ICRC (see above), 1,219 received first installment payments and 1,041 families received first and second installment payments; the ICRC followed up the cases of families who had yet to receive such support. As in previous years, children of missing persons, and children detained during the conflict or orphaned as a result of it, did not regularly benefit from government assistance, owing to lack of funding. Nonetheless,

through referrals/follow-up, 84 such children received scholarships from the government or private establishments.

Acting on ICRC recommendations, the Nepal Society of Families of the Disappeared and Missing (NEFAD; formerly the National Network of Families of Disappeared and Missing) worked with various agencies to raise awareness countrywide of the plight of the families of the missing, and support for them.

Stakeholders boost forensic capacities

The authorities and other relevant actors received ICRC input for facilitating exhumations and ensuring that people did not go unaccounted for. The department of forensic medicine at Nepal's Institute of Medicine installed ICRC-provided ante/post-mortem data-management software to help it – and any future commission on the missing – resolve cases of missing persons. The National Human Rights Commission and the ICRC worked to obtain court approval for exhuming human remains related to cases of disappearance, including at five gravesites identified by National Society/ICRC teams; however, the exhumations had yet to be carried out.

APF/NP officers became more adept at managing human remains through National Society/ICRC train-the-trainer courses; afterwards, they passed on what they had learnt to peers, including at a disaster-management course. Nearly 400 APF/NP officers underwent basic training in the subject. National Society instructors and 175 volunteers attended similar sessions.

Refugees and vulnerable detainees re-establish contact with relatives

After obtaining permission from the Department of Prison Management with ICRC help, trained National Society teams resumed family-links services – in June, following a year-long suspension – at three prisons in Kathmandu Valley, benefiting foreign detainees and vulnerable Nepalese inmates who had had no contact with relatives.

Families separated from relatives abroad, particularly Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and their relatives detained in Bhutan (see *New Delhi*), restored/maintained contact through such services. Forty-three refugees visited 20 relatives detained in Bhutan, and one family travelled to Bhutan to bury a deceased, formerly detained relative.

Six people, who were detained during the conflict, obtained government compensation after receiving detention attestations.

WOUNDED AND SICK

Injured people receive emergency care

Almost 13,600 people, including those wounded during unrest (see *Context*), received first aid from ICRC-supported National Society teams. Ad hoc donations of medical supplies helped 36 hospitals provide medical/surgical care to wounded and other patients.

Reports of obstruction of/damage sustained by ambulances, including those belonging to the National Society, prompted a need to reinforce the messages of the Health Care in Danger project. Through bilateral contacts and seven round-tables, all relevant actors were reminded of their obligation to permit the wounded access to care. At one such round-table, representatives of various sectors – including health authorities, ambulance service providers and the media – and of National Society branches discussed

the misuse of ambulances and obstacles to service delivery. They adopted a code of conduct harmonizing ambulance services and set up a committee to monitor its implementation. District ambulance management committees and National Society branches coordinated the provision of first-aid training to ambulance drivers. Jingles in local languages, aired on radio in 62 districts, also raised awareness of the need to respect medical personnel/infrastructure. Some 25 hospital directors attended a workshop – organized with the Nepal Medical Association – on these issues.

Nepalese doctors upgrade trauma-management skills

Local capacities were strengthened by National Society/ICRC-supported training, helping overcome constraints in the provision of emergency/health services. Over 330 APF/NP officers added to their first-aid skills and to their ability to teach the subject. Particularly in the run-up to the elections, National Society instructors and nearly 540 volunteers attended similar sessions on first aid. The National Society maintained/repaired its ambulances with ICRC support, enabling services to resume in some districts.

Through emergency room trauma-management courses facilitated with instructors from the Kathmandu University Hospital, 63 doctors, including 2 from the Bangladesh army, and 40 medical students upgraded their skills. One orthopaedic surgeon learnt more about mass-casualty management at a course abroad.

Disabled people improve their mobility

In all, 1,371 disabled people, including mine/ERW/IED victims, received physical rehabilitation services at the ICRC-supported Yerahiti National Rehabilitation Centre and the Green Pastures Hospital. They included amputees whose mobility was enhanced by artificial limbs. Over 160 people, including conflict-disabled patients, received free treatment; 51 had their transport costs covered. Technical support from both the centre and the hospital enabled 119 disabled people in a camp in Butwal, southern Nepal, to receive follow-up care, such as repairs to their devices or referrals for new ones.

To enhance local capacities/service quality, three technicians from the centre and the hospital underwent formal schooling abroad; others benefited from on-the-job training. To ensure sustainability, the National Association of Service Providers in Rehabilitation, with ICRC input, drafted a national plan for physical rehabilitation services. Discussions with the Peace and Reconstruction Ministry explored the possibility of providing interim support for disabled people.

National Society mine-risk education sessions helped reduce the risks to communities in mine/ERW-contaminated areas, as did radio advertisements broadcast countrywide – including on government stations – in coordination with the Peace and Reconstruction Ministry.

Two conflict-disabled people restored a degree of self-sufficiency through ICRC-supported micro-economic initiatives.

AUTHORITIES, ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Authorities and public broaden their awareness of humanitarian concerns

National Society/ICRC dialogue with the authorities, military/security forces and key members of civil society raised awareness of and garnered support for humanitarian principles and concerns

(see *Wounded and sick*), IHL, international human rights law, and the Movement's activities. Given the potential for unrest, this was especially important.

Media coverage of National Society/ICRC activities, based on ICRC press releases, interviews, round-tables and audiovisual materials – including a documentary on the plight of the families of missing persons in Nepal – raised public awareness of humanitarian concerns and the Movement, as did National Society IHL-promotion activities backed by updated materials. These activities included a photo exhibition marking the Nepalese Red Cross's 50th anniversary and a weekly radio programme. At a regional conference, two Nepalese journalists shared best practices with peers and bolstered their ability to report on humanitarian affairs (see *New Delhi*).

Human rights advocates, lawyers, lecturers and students furthered their understanding of IHL at ICRC-supported briefings/events. Students from three universities tested each other's knowledge of IHL at a competition. Two universities received updated IHL publications for their libraries.

Cooperation in IHL training with army resumes after two years

National Society/ICRC briefings and courses in IHL enhanced knowledge of the subject among the Nepalese Army/APF/NP and encouraged its dissemination among their ranks.

Following the resumption of cooperation after a two-year gap, the Nepalese Army organized two advanced IHL courses for instructors and, for the first time, one IHL course exclusively for legal officers (totalling 66 participants). Officers from the Army Command and Staff College and 50 peacekeepers attended pre-deployment briefings. Two senior military officers attended advanced IHL courses in San Remo, and in Colombia (see *International law and cooperation*).

Although formal cooperation with the APF in training officers in IHL/international human rights law remained on hold as the Home Affairs Ministry was reviewing it, the APF and the ICRC kept up dialogue on incorporating international norms in the former's doctrine, training and operations. The APF/NP included ICRC briefings on IHL and international norms on the use of force in law enforcement, on an ad hoc basis, in their training courses in these subjects; the courses were attended by some 250 and 20 officers, respectively.

National IHL committee pursues initiatives despite political impasse

The prevailing political situation and the absence of a legislative body hampered the adoption of mechanisms to address the needs of families of missing persons and of a stand-alone Red Cross Act to strengthen the National Society's legal status. The situation also delayed accession to IHL-related treaties and domestic IHL implementation. Nevertheless, through the initiatives of the national IHL committee and with National Society/ICRC input, the authorities engaged in discussions on the Hague Convention on Cultural Property, voted in favour of the Arms Trade Treaty and continued working on an official Nepali translation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The national IHL committee finalized, and prepared to issue, an IHL handbook for parliamentarians and civilian authorities, which was drafted in 2012. It had not yet approved the Geneva Conventions Bill.

The Public Service Commission incorporated IHL in the training of civil servants. Two government officials contributed to a regional consultation on the “Strengthening IHL” process (see *Kuala Lumpur*). At the 22nd South Asia Teaching Session on IHL, organized with the Kathmandu School of Law, 46 officials from 10 countries, among them 11 from Nepal, shared best practices in implementing IHL. Others discussed similar subjects at events abroad, including a meeting of national IHL committees from member States of the Commonwealth of Nations (see *Caracas*).

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Nepalese Red Cross – the ICRC’s key operational partner – reinforced its capacities in restoring family links, human remains management, first aid, mine-risk education and IHL promotion, and strove to strengthen its legal status and government-auxiliary role; the ICRC provided financial/material/technical/training support for this (see above).

National Society volunteers underwent training in applying the Safer Access Framework, particularly important in light of the potential for emergencies. This also enhanced the public image of the National Society among stakeholders, locally and nationally.

The National Society continued to review its constitution, in accordance with organizational development initiatives begun in 2012. Its gender and social inclusion department organized workshops at which staff/volunteers from headquarters and district chapters shared their views on promoting gender diversity and social inclusion within the National Society.

The National Society, the International Federation and the ICRC renewed their cooperation agreement and met regularly to coordinate activities.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		41		
RCMs distributed		43		
Names published in the media		1,360		
Names published on the ICRC family-links website		1,401		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		45	3	11
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		29		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		1,359	94	148
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		44		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Restoring family links			Women	Minors
RCMs collected		56		
RCMs distributed		31		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		6		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	3,725	51%	
Cash	Beneficiaries	4,366	36%	32%
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	6	50%	33%
WOUNDED AND SICK				
Hospitals				
Hospitals supported	Structures	36		
First aid				
First-aid posts supported	Structures	43		
	<i>of which provided data</i>	Structures	43	
Wounded patients treated	Patients	13,597		
Physical rehabilitation				
Centres supported	Structures	2		
Patients receiving services	Patients	1,371	409	114
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	79	23	4
Prostheses delivered	Units	115	31	7
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	Units	13	
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	87	23	28
Orthoses delivered	Units	138	39	46
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	Units	1	
Patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	186	58	19
Crutches delivered	Units	321		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	150		