

# SUVA (regional)

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



ICRC regional delegation ICRC mission ICRC office/presence

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 and other international norms among armed and security forces, as well as among academic circles, the media and civil society. The ICRC works to ensure that victims of violence in Papua New Guinea receive emergency aid and medical care, while it visits detainees there and elsewhere in the region. It helps National Societies build their emergency response capacities.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

### In 2013:

- ▶ detainees benefited from ICRC visits, recommendations and assistance programmes, which in particular improved the water supply in the women's ward of a facility in Papua New Guinea
- ▶ violence-affected communities in the Papua New Guinea Highlands region met some basic needs with Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society/ICRC support
- ▶ Pacific States ratified/implemented IHL-related treaties, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Additional Protocol III, and the Hague Convention on Cultural Property, with 8 States signing the Arms Trade Treaty
- ▶ military experts from 20 countries discussed how to protect medical services at a workshop hosted by the Australian authorities, as well as at pre-workshop events with the ICRC
- ▶ Pacific Island National Societies, supported by the Australian and New Zealand National Societies, the International Federation and the ICRC, became more adept at first aid, restoring family links and the Safer Access Framework

EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)	
Protection	886
Assistance	1,612
Prevention	1,915
Cooperation with National Societies	1,278
General	-

**5,691**

of which: Overheads 347

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>107%</b>

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	10
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	24

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
Red Cross messages (RCMs)	
RCMs collected	44
RCMs distributed	47
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	4,299
Detainees visited and monitored individually	55
Number of visits carried out	45
Number of places of detention visited	24
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	72
RCMs distributed	37
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	9

ASSISTANCE	Targets	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,000 / 8,075
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	6,000 / 1,410
Health		
Health centres supported	Structures	5

## CONTEXT

Natural disasters, fragile national economies and intercommunal violence remained the main threats to stability and prosperity in the Pacific Islands region. An 8.0-magnitude earthquake caused deaths and displacement in the Solomon Islands. Three major tropical cyclones resulted in localized flooding and destruction of homes across the region.

Papua New Guinea was generally stable under its new government. However, the level of violent crime in the country and intercommunal fighting in the Highlands region prompted the government to take several measures: for instance, it deployed its defence forces to the Highlands for law enforcement purposes.

Fiji approved a new constitution, and general elections were scheduled for 2014.

Implementation of the recommendations in the Solomon Islands' Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report on the 1998–2003 violence remained uncertain. The Australian Defence Force gradually withdrew its troops from the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.

The governments of Australia and New Zealand, the former holding a seat on the UN Security Council until end-2014, maintained their strong involvement in humanitarian affairs.

Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga continued to provide troops for peacekeeping operations and/or international coalitions; the deployment of Australian forces to Afghanistan, the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste came to an end.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC focused on building up its operations in Papua New Guinea to address humanitarian needs arising from past conflict in Bougainville and ongoing intercommunal violence in the Highlands. It also helped enhance the capacities of the region's National Societies in coordination with the International Federation and contributed to increasing the impact of Movement activities in the Pacific. It nurtured relations with States influential in humanitarian affairs and contributing to Movement operations.

In Papua New Guinea, the ICRC continued to provide assistance in two priority areas in the Highlands that were the scene of intercommunal violence: communities resumed daily activities with tools, essential household items and agricultural supplies/equipment distributed by Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society/ICRC teams. Residents in one community ensured that people wounded in the violence could receive immediate care, by building a first-aid post with their health authority and the ICRC. In another community, National Society volunteers improved access for people to safe water by rehabilitating their water supply system, using adapted methods learnt from ICRC training. The communities and the ICRC discussed humanitarian principles such as respect for health facilities; owing to prevailing conditions, such dialogue with the leaders and members of the fighting groups remained limited.

People affected by past conflict in Bougainville, as well as civil society actors and other key stakeholders, and the ICRC continued discussions on the issue of persons unaccounted for as a result of the conflict, ways to resolve the issue and possible areas for cooperation.

In Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, delegates visited detainees in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures and reported their findings and recommendations in confidence to the authorities, to help them improve detainees' treatment and living conditions. In Papua New Guinea, the ICRC supported the authorities in addressing health/hygiene issues among detainees, taking steps to offset prohibitive construction costs and other constraints. With the National Society, it also organized family visits for some detainees.

The ICRC visited migrants detained at offshore processing centres established within the framework of agreements between the Australian government and those of Nauru and Papua New Guinea. The Australian Red Cross provided support for the ICRC to visit the centre in Manus Island, Papua New Guinea; the two organizations jointly visited the centre in Nauru. The ICRC shared its findings bilaterally with the authorities concerned.

Progress was made in domestic IHL implementation throughout the region, with several countries ratifying or signing IHL-related treaties, including the Arms Trade Treaty. Several others passed domestic laws implementing IHL. The governments of Australia and New Zealand contributed to a meeting associated with the "Strengthening IHL" process. Their National Societies, together with the International Federation/ICRC, followed up pledges made by the Pacific region at the 31st International Conference, in advance of the Movement's statutory meetings in Sydney, Australia. Several National Societies prepared to launch IHL handbooks for parliamentarians.

Periodic bilateral and multilateral dialogue, including at high levels in Australia and New Zealand, as well as contacts with the region's armed/security forces and civil society, enabled the ICRC to address humanitarian concerns such as civil-military relations and new technologies in warfare. Military experts from 20 countries made recommendations for protecting medical services during armed conflict and other emergencies at a workshop hosted by the Australian government and armed forces in connection with the Health Care in Danger project.

National Societies of the Pacific Islands boosted their capacities in emergency preparedness, first aid, restoring family links, promotion of IHL, and the Safer Access Framework, with technical and financial support from the Australian Red Cross, the New Zealand Red Cross, the International Federation and the ICRC.

## CIVILIANS

### Violence-affected communities in the Papua New Guinea Highlands region meet some basic needs

In Papua New Guinea, intercommunal violence in the Highlands continued to cause injuries and death, destruction of homes and livelihoods, and displacement. Violence-affected people in two areas particularly affected by the fighting benefited from National Society/ICRC activities, conducted in line with findings of past studies that showed, *inter alia*, that communities involved in fighting respected the principle of neutrality as long as their agreement was obtained before delivering assistance.

At preparatory meetings and information sessions held around the distribution of assistance, communities learnt about the ICRC's activities and discussed humanitarian principles such as respect for schools and health facilities. Although some leaders of the communities involved in fighting were met, substantial dialogue with

them and with the Highlands authorities on broader humanitarian concerns remained sporadic, owing to the adverse environment.

Nonetheless, over 8,000 people (1,615 households) affected by fighting eased their conditions, thanks to National Society/ICRC-donated tools, household essentials and agricultural instruments.

### People affected by Highlands violence build a community first-aid post

Building on its relations with district- and provincial-level health authorities, the ICRC collected allegations of violence against patients, health staff and facilities via health centres and, whenever possible, communicated these to the actors concerned, with a view to promoting unhindered access to health care. The strengthened relations were helpful in carrying out improvements at some health centres.

With ICRC support, community representatives, local police, and health authorities boosted their capacities to treat people injured during fighting: they learnt first aid at National Society/ICRC training sessions and received dressing materials. Residents of Uma in the heavily affected Kagua Erave district in the Southern Highlands built a first-aid post using ICRC-supplied construction materials. The provincial health authority committed to providing medicines and training health workers to staff the post. Health services there were expected to begin in 2014; meanwhile, people accessed safe water through a tapstand installed in the facility.

One victim with severe injuries was evacuated by the ICRC for hospital treatment. Otherwise, people injured during fighting were treated at three health facilities that received ad hoc donations of medical equipment and dressing kits; damaged/dilapidated facilities also received solar lamps and basic furnishings from the ICRC.

### Violence-affected people gain access to safe water through National Society/ICRC-rehabilitated system

Conditions for communities in the Western Highlands region improved after they acquired better access to safe drinking water, thanks to ICRC efforts to devise provisional/alternative solutions such as water treatment kits and well-construction methods adapted to the prohibitive costs, transportation issues and other obstacles to construction in the country. After learning such methods during on-the-job training with the ICRC, National Society volunteers rehabilitated the water system in one community; two other communities benefited from ICRC-installed rain-water harvesting systems.

In southern Bougainville, 190 violence-affected households resumed daily activities with donated household items. As the violence subsided, support for the Tabago hospital ended, after a final donation of a generator and six months' fuel. A local organization, with ICRC support, rehabilitated two safe houses sheltering female victims of violence.

### Bougainvillean authorities, civil society representatives and residents discuss consequences of past conflict

Three exhibits organized by the University of Papua New Guinea and the ICRC featured paintings by Bougainville residents, done in 2012 to express their feelings about the past crisis and their hopes for the future. Such events provided a platform for discussions with the authorities and communities affected about the issue of persons reported missing during the crisis. Stakeholders, including Bougainvillean and Papua New Guinean government representatives, key diplomatic officials and NGOs, increased their awareness of the issue at various meetings.

An assessment of the situation of Bougainvillean citizens who were children during the past crisis and had been placed in foster homes in mainland Papua New Guinea revealed that those who wished to had remained in contact with their families or had returned to Bougainville. National Society/ICRC family-links services were thus not required.

### Disaster victims stand to benefit from improved Movement response

Given the sporadic unrest and the region's susceptibility to natural disasters, people stood to benefit from regional efforts – including under the International Federation's disaster management and response platforms and/or with the support of the Australian and New Zealand National Societies – to bolster emergency preparedness, including first aid during periods of violence; family-links services during disasters; the promotion of humanitarian principles; and the Safer Access Framework.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

People deprived of their freedom in Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu received visits from delegates, conducted in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures. Detaining authorities received confidential feedback to help them improve detainees' treatment and living conditions.

Although a memorandum of understanding formalizing ICRC access to detention facilities remained pending with the authorities, in Papua New Guinea, people held at eight correctional

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM	FIJI	NAURU	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	SOLOMON ISLANDS	VANUATU
<b>ICRC visits</b>					
Detainees visited	23	788	3,405	26	57
<i>of whom women</i>		102	209		
<i>of whom minors</i>		83	113		1
Detainees visited and monitored individually	22	13		20	
Detainees newly registered	10	13			
Number of visits carried out	8	6	27	2	2
Number of places of detention visited	4	2	14	2	2
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected			72		
RCMs distributed			37		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative			9		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support			30	21	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	3		1		

institutions and five police stations benefited from regular visits to monitor their treatment and living conditions. Dialogue with the authorities and the police covered such subjects as judicial guarantees and respect for detainees' other rights.

Government bodies in Australia, Nauru and Papua New Guinea and the ICRC discussed the situation of hundreds of migrants detained in two offshore processing centres in Nauru and on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. The authorities concerned also received reports containing the ICRC's findings and recommendations following its visits to the migrants, including those made in Nauru with the Australian Red Cross.

Former internees of the US facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba who had been resettled in Palau received continued ICRC support for their communications needs and to follow up their situations with the authorities concerned.

#### **Detainees in Papua New Guinea have better access to water**

In Papua New Guinea, detainees at seven correctional institutions and six police stations had better living conditions owing to ICRC donations of hygiene materials and recreational items. Inmates at two facilities, including one for women, had better access to safe water following ICRC-supported installation of water tanks and a rainwater collection system. Detainees at four correctional institutions also met their health needs at on-site clinics refurbished with ICRC-provided equipment.

In Fiji, inmates at three cyclone-affected prisons received mattresses and shelter materials distributed by the ICRC.

Practical technical solutions, such as adapted water treatment kits, and partnerships with the authorities and other key stakeholders were developed in Papua New Guinea to improve conditions in other detention facilities quickly and at lower cost, mitigating constraints to construction work (see also *Civilians*). Two members of the correctional services staff learnt more about water and sanitation issues at an international seminar in Cambodia (see *Bangkok*).

#### **Detainees reconnect with relatives through family visits**

At two detention facilities in Papua New Guinea, 30 detainees originally from Bougainville were visited by relatives through a National Society/ICRC family visits programme. With ICRC financial support, two detainees returned home three months after their release.

In the Solomon Islands, 21 detainees benefited from family visits facilitated by the ICRC.

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

#### **States pass legislation implementing IHL**

Bilateral and multilateral relations with the region's governments and within bodies such as the Pacific Island Law Officers' Network (PILON), helped promote IHL implementation and awareness of humanitarian issues.

Australia ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions and enacted legislation activating the ICRC's headquarters agreement. New Zealand passed implementing legislation on Additional Protocol III and the Hague Convention on Cultural Property, as did the Federated States of Micronesia on the Chemical Weapons Convention. Eight Pacific States signed the Arms Trade Treaty.

Samoa and the Solomon Islands considered domestic legislation on the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The Australian and New Zealand authorities, including their national IHL committees, followed up IHL developments, receiving ICRC input on guidelines for protecting civilians and on a national action plan on women, peace and security (Australia) and on the Montreux document on private military and security companies (New Zealand).

In Papua New Guinea, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the ICRC discussed accession to the Additional Protocols, the establishment of a national IHL committee and an agreement formalizing the ICRC's presence in the country. No progress was made on either front, but ICRC activities continued in the country (see above).

During PILON's annual meeting, representatives of most of the States in the region learnt more about ICRC-recommended best practices in implementing IHL domestically. The Australian and New Zealand governments contributed to a regional meeting on the "Strengthening IHL" process (see *Kuala Lumpur*).

#### **Military experts endorse methods for protecting medical services**

Some 30 military experts from over 20 countries discussed methods for protecting medical personnel and facilities during combat operations, and ways to implement these throughout the chain of command, at a workshop hosted by the Australian government and armed forces in connection with the Health Care in Danger project. Relations between the participants, particularly Australians and New Zealanders, and the ICRC developed further during in-depth exchanges at pre-workshop events.

#### **Armed/security forces learn more about IHL during training with Pacific counterparts**

The Australian military/police forces conferred with the ICRC on IHL-related, humanitarian or operational issues, including lessons learnt from their Afghanistan operations and prospects for cooperation thereafter, and various training initiatives, including pre-deployment briefings, programmes with the Australian Red Cross and multinational military exercises.

The New Zealand armed forces launched a civil-military relations course, with ICRC support.

The Papua New Guinean armed forces and the ICRC discussed the issue of persons unaccounted for in Bougainville (see *Civilians*) and other IHL-related matters. The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and the ICRC maintained contact, allowing the former to deepen its understanding of internationally recognized policing standards. Private security companies operating in sensitive areas in the country and the ICRC updated each other on their activities.

Officers added to their knowledge of IHL and other applicable norms at local/overseas briefings/courses. These included: sessions at Australia and New Zealand's command and staff colleges; a Fijian military-sponsored workshop for Fijian and Papua New Guinean military/police/corrections officers; workshops for senior Papua New Guinean military officers and Bougainville/Highlands police forces; an international workshop on public order management (see *Jakarta*); and a workshop on military sanctions in

Switzerland, attended by Fijian military officials. Top officials also attended advanced courses in Colombia (see *International law and cooperation*) and in San Remo.

Peacekeeping troops attended ICRC-facilitated predeployment briefings.

### **Public and civil society sectors in Australia and New Zealand extend humanitarian debate**

Authorities (including at high level in Australia and New Zealand), think-tanks, academic institutions, civil society organizations and the Australian and New Zealand National Societies promoted IHL among various audiences and raised awareness of domestic/global humanitarian issues such as the goals of the Health Care in Danger project, new technologies in warfare, civil-military relations and the Arms Trade Treaty. They incorporated humanitarian themes and ICRC presentations in their programmes/activities, which included exhibits/events around the Movement's statutory meetings, courses at the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law in Australia and the annual conference of the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law and work with an NGO coordinating body in New Zealand.

In Australia, government employees, Civilian Corps members, humanitarian/NGO workers and students furthered their understanding of IHL, humanitarian issues and the ICRC's mandate at National Society/ICRC lectures.

University students from Australia and New Zealand participated in moot court competitions, including at regional level (see *Beijing*). A Fijian high school student spoke about nuclear weapons at the Movement's statutory meetings, in consequence of winning an ICRC-supported Pacific-wide speech competition organized by the New Zealand Red Cross.

The media raised awareness of humanitarian issues, using ICRC resources for their stories on the organization's activities in their countries – e.g. family visits for detainees in Papua New Guinea – and abroad. An Australian correspondent contributed to an international conference on conflict reporting (see *New Delhi*). Online initiatives helped expand the ICRC's audience in Australia.

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

Pacific Island National Societies – together with the Australian, French, Japanese and New Zealand National Societies – strengthened common approaches to humanitarian priorities at Movement-organized events, including one for legal advisers (see *Beijing*).

The Republic of the Marshall Islands Red Cross strengthened its legal base after obtaining government recognition. As with other National Societies, it received support in this process and/or in clarifying their auxiliary roles. The National Societies in the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands, with Australian Red Cross support, drafted/launched IHL handbooks for their parliamentarians.

The National Societies boosted their leadership and governance with help from the Movement's Pacific Governance Enhancement Programme Working Group, which reviewed its terms of reference and formed a complementary group focusing on finance.

The Australian/New Zealand National Societies, with the International Federation/ICRC, followed up pledges made by the Pacific region at the 31st International Conference, in advance of the Movement's statutory meetings in Sydney.

National Societies furthered their IHL promotion and emergency response capacities through ICRC-supported events, (see *Civilians*); the International Federation and the ICRC developed family-links data collection templates and a training curriculum for Pacific Island National Societies. Australian and New Zealand Red Cross staff interested in working in overseas operations attended ICRC briefings.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		44		
RCMs distributed		47		
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		14	3	7
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		14	3	7
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		4,299	311	197
Detainees visited and monitored individually		55		
Detainees newly registered		23		
Number of visits carried out		45		
Number of places of detention visited		24		
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		72		
RCMs distributed		37		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		9		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		51		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		4		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Fiji, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	8,075	17%	48%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	8,075		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	1,410	43%	14%
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)</b>				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	2,043		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	2,700		

1. Papua New Guinea