



ICRC

ICRC Bulletin

Issue No.8
Winter 2009



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An ICRC hygiene promoter teaches hygiene awareness to women living in the poorest parts of Kabul, Afghanistan



Dear Readers,

As Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur, it has been my extraordinary good fortune and privilege to have worked with the authorities in Japan and the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) over the past four and a half years. However, as they say, all good things must come to an end. I would like to seize this opportunity to outline briefly the progress made in the cooperation between the ICRC and Japan during this period.

In 2004/5, Japan gave new impetus to its ambition to lead by example in relation to Humanitarian Law. In the context of the Emergency Laws, which govern Japan's response in case of an armed attack on the country, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ICRC had extensive and successful exchanges on the legal issues involved. In addition, as JRCS has the responsibility to trace non-Japanese civilians in emergencies, the focus of the ICRC was to provide its expertise to the Cabinet Secretariat and various Ministries on the operational

aspects of the reestablishment of links between separated family members. The building of tracing capacity within the JRCS in emergencies will continue to be one of the priorities for the ICRC.

Another highlight was the collaboration with the Japanese Self Defence Forces (JSDF), in particular with the Ground Forces, the Central Readiness Force, the National Institute for Defence Studies and the Tokyo Defence Forum. The ICRC has contributed to the JSDF's preparation for international emergency operations and peace building missions abroad.

One of our main modes of operation, i.e. neutral and independent humanitarian action, seems to echo particularly well in Japan. Clearly, we can take pride in the fact that Japan and the ICRC enjoy shared basic human values and interests. Human Security was one of the main topics of the humanitarian assistance symposium jointly organised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on October 30, 2009.

A significant milestone in the relationship between the ICRC and Japan was the

opening of our Tokyo office in February this year. This permanent presence in Japan has led to a considerable increase in networking with civil society and the media. We have also been able to fine-tune our cooperation with the authorities and the JRCS. We remain open to suggestions with regard to how we can best meet your expectations.

My warm wishes go to every one of you, and heartfelt thanks for all your kind support to the ICRC and me personally. The numerous books and documents I have read on Japan could never have replaced the unforgettable experiences I have had with people such as you.

Finally, I would like to wish all the best to my successor Tobias Epprecht as well as Yoshinobu Nagamine, Head of Tokyo Office.

Yours sincerely,

Werner Kaspar

Former Head of
Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur
International Committee of the Red Cross



Humanitarian Assistance in Asia

Symposium on Humanitarian Assistance in Armed Conflict

On October 30, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) and the ICRC, jointly organized the Symposium on Humanitarian Assistance in Armed Conflict. attended by more than 150 participants representing MOFA, the Ministry of Defence, NGOs, UN representatives, Embassies and the media. It was inaugurated by the opening remarks



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There are more than 150 participants at the symposium. It was transmitted live on web

of the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Chinami Nishimura, and

Werner Kaspar, Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur.

The Symposium dealt with three main topics: (i) Human Security and Humanitarian Assistance; (ii) Security management of Staff; and (iii) Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan.

Human Security find its roots in the 1994 UNDP's Human Development Report. In the 15 years it has the concept has been adopted by many countries in the world. Today Japan is one of strongest supporters of ensuring "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity.

In the second session the discussion shifted on the issue of the Security Management of Staff. The panelists spoke on the importance of developing a "culture of security" through a better integration of security principles and daily activities, focusing on analysis, planning

and preparedness related to security risk management; and finally working for acceptance of local communities to enhance staff security and enable access to victims.

In the concluding panel, Yoshinobu Nagamine, Head of ICRC Tokyo, has elaborated that the ambition of the ICRC is to provide victims assistance and protection by giving support to hospitals, orthopaedic centres, ensuring access to drinking water, monitoring the way the conflict has been fought; and by visiting detention centers to assess compliance with national and international laws and standards. He also pointed out the potential constraints faced in delivering humanitarian assistance when subordinated to military or political objectives. Hence, Nagamine stressed that relief actions should be exclusively humanitarian, neutral and impartial, he reiterated that the role of ICRC is central in ensuring assistance to all persons based solely on needs.

Alain Aeschlimann delivers press briefing

Following the Symposium, Alain Aeschlimann, Head of ICRC East Asia, South-East Asia and Pacific Operations, visited the Japan Press Club to brief the media on various humanitarian crises in the region. The core objectives of the ICRC in the region include efforts to strengthen relationships with political actors and civil society for increased political anchorage; to multiply platforms for dialogue on humanitarian issues; to promote International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in government, religious or civilian circles; and to foster the capacity of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, particularly in relation with natural disasters.

From the operational point of view, Aeschlimann spoke about the organization's activities in the Philippines. The ICRC is active in the conflict areas and regularly visits detainees in approximately 120 locations throughout the country. Another central issue is protection and assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), some 150,000 of whom benefit from ICRC's presence.

In Thailand, the ICRC visits detainees in the south; in Cambodia it visits detention facilities and provides orthopedic support to the government; and in North Korea, the ICRC assists the orthopedic activities of the North Korean Red Cross society. Aeschlimann noted that the Red Cross Society in both North and South Korea have continued to work on bringing families together. The ICRC was encouraged to see its resumption last September, given the high number of separated families on both sides of the peninsula. In China, the ICRC is active in the promotion of rehabilitation programs and the translation of many IHL-related materials into

Chinese. During the Q&A session, Aeschlimann clarified some very crucial points related to the abduction of three ICRC staff by the Abu Sayyaf Islamist separatist group based in Jolo, southern Philippines. He said that ICRC staff did not seem to be particularly targeted in the region. He stressed that the ICRC has a very strict policy on not paying money in case of staff abduction to avoid potential consequences to ICRC operations in other parts of the world. For this reason, it is crucial for the ICRC to ensure that its mission is fully understood by everybody to guarantee transparency and acceptance of the local community.



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Alain Aeschlimann, ICRC Head of East Asia and South East Asia and Pacific Operations

Report on Internally displaced persons

ICRC calls for more action to help IDPs outside camps

Launching the recent report, "Internal Displacement in Armed Conflict: facing up to the challenges", the ICRC President Jacob Kellenberger addressed the internally displaced persons (IDPs) issue as one of the most serious humanitarian consequences of the conflicts in the 21st century.

The report acknowledges that, due to violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) committed by conflict parties, many people affected by conflict are forced to flee their homes and face extreme hardship, such as direct attacks, ill-treatment, sexual violence and the loss of their property or livelihood.

It then stresses its focus on the peculiar conditions of IDPs that, instead of ending up in camps, are taken in by host communities

and families. The estimated 26 million IDPs worldwide often rely on the support of already extremely poor host communities. Kellenberger argues that special attention must be conferred, not only to IDPs, but also to the families who take them in.

In 2008, the ICRC assisted some 3.77 million IDPs, often in partnership with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, but a more comprehensive approach is needed to address the IDPs emergency aid. The findings of this report aim to reach government authorities, conflict parties,

humanitarian organisations as well as donors to look beyond the camps, and urges for further respect for IHL as a means to prevent displacement and protect IDPs.



Non food items distribution by the ICRC, supported by the Yemen Red Crescent Society, to IDPs: September, 2009

Q&A on IDPs

What causes internal displacement and is it possible to prevent it from occurring?

Based on the work we do, I think there are two major causes of forced displacement.

Firstly, people flee their homes because of direct threats to their lives, such as armed conflict, violence, discrimination or intimidation. Choosing to flee your home is an agonising decision. It exposes people to physical harm, destitution, loss of their regular way of life and separation from loved ones.

Secondly, people leave their homes because their livelihoods are threatened. Fighting and insecurity can make it impossible for them to earn a living or to access essential services. It can disrupt their access to health care, water supply, education, and so on.

As to your question if it is possible to prevent displacement from occurring, the answer is yes and no. Displacement is, in no small measure, a result of violations of IHL. We believe that IHL violations are preventable, and a considerable amount of our work aims to do just that, which is coherent and consistent with our mandate.

However, when the pressure for them to leave is unbearable, and the only way to

preserve life and dignity is to leave, focusing on preventing their displacement would not make sense. Once a family or community has decided to go, the only possible decision for the ICRC is to alleviate their suffering and assist in any way possible. The recent case of Pakistan is a good example where the ICRC, together with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, provided a wide range of assistance to hundred of thousands of people fleeing the fighting in various provinces. National Societies' knowledge of the local dynamics, environment and culture is crucial.

The ICRC conducts a wide range of activities before, during and after displacement, tailored to the specific circumstances of the affected communities. The needs of the people guide our operational choices.

Could you explain the role of host communities and why they also need assistance?

IDPs are likely to seek shelter among family or friends in nearby communities so as to minimise the disruption to their lives. These host families and communities take in the newcomers, sharing their own – often meagre – resources even before international organizations or NGOs know that there is a problem or step in to help. In recent years, the Democratic Republic of the

Congo has experienced successive waves of displacement of the same populations, within the same regions. Two thirds of the displaced people have stayed with host families, placing an enormous strain on the resources of local communities. That is why it is so important to ensure they receive assistance.

By preferring to stay among family or friends in nearby communities, many IDPs go unnoticed by international or government aid agencies. It is harder to reach IDPs in places where they find refuge than to set up shelters, which may be more convenient or easier for us. However if we really want to meet the needs of displaced people we must make it a priority to reach out to them in the communities that offer them shelter.

Somalia is a good example of a major operation to help civilians in their communities – often including huge numbers of displaced people – rather than in camps. Since the beginning of the 1990s together with the Somali Red Crescent Society, we provide IDPs health services, improve water and sanitation and distribute seeds and tools to enable people to regain their self-sufficiency.

To learn more about the report:
[http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p1014/\\$File/ICRC_002_4014.PDF](http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/p1014/$File/ICRC_002_4014.PDF)

International RC/RC Movement

Mr. Konoe becomes the first leader of the Federation from Asia

The current President of the Japan Red Cross Society (JRCS), Mr. Tadateru Konoe, was elected as the 15th President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in the General Assembly organized on November 19 in Nairobi, Kenya. The inauguration was held on November 22.

In the election attended by the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies (NS) from 186 member countries and areas, 107 votes went to Mr. Konoe, while Mr. Mario Villaroel-Lander (President of the Venezuela Red Cross Society), garnered 70 votes. In the IFRC's 90-year history, Mr. Konoe is the first president from Asia.

In his speech, the newly elected president regarded the diversity of the National Societies as strength, so long as NS can retain unity in our action. Konoe urged all NS to share the "Spirit of Togetherness" by fostering the culture of working as a Federation.

In his new four-year role to promote the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Mr. Konoe's focus will include relief work in natural disaster, strengthening the health and hygiene activities, as well as advocating for humanitarianism and the Movement's principles in international fora, including at the United Nations.

The Profile of Mr. Tadateru Konoe

Mr. Konoe was born on May 8, same date of birth as Henry Dunant (the founder of the Red Cross), in 1939. He graduated from the Gakushuin University in Tokyo, and furthered his studies in International Relations at the London School of Economics. He joined the JRCS in 1964 and worked in Geneva for 8 years. In 2005, Mr. Konoe became the President of the JRCS and the Vice President of the IFRC.



Representatives of National Societies congratulated newly elected IFRC President, Mr. Tadateru Konoe, on his victory: General Assembly of the IFRC in Nairobi, November 19

The 3 Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

The Red Cross, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, no matter they are friends or enemies, endeavors – in its international and national capacity – to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found.

The three components of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, namely, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies throughout the world (NS), have a mandate to extend humanitarian assistance and protection on a neutral and impartial basis.

Although sounding similar, the ICRC and the IFRC are separate legal entities.

The JRCS falls into the last category as a NS. While the ICRC focuses on the assistance and protection activities in conflict, NS are predominately responsible for activities in medical support and natural disaster at national levels. The role to assist, promote and coordinate the activities of NS is played by a separate legal entity, the IFRC.

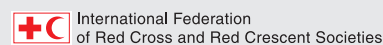
While Japan welcomes the re-establishment of the ICRC's office in Tokyo after 60 years, it is even more encouraging that JRCS President Konoe has become the President of the IFRC.

These developments reflect the progressive partnership between the components of the RC/RC Movement in relation to Japan, thereby allowing for further promotion of principles and activities in the country.

International Committee of the Red Cross



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



National Societies

