



ICRC

NEWSLETTER

of the ICRC Regional Delegation Belgrade,
covering Serbia, Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro

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Macedonian students discuss humanitarian law in class with their teacher

TEACHERS GET TRAINED IN HUMANITARIAN LAW

The education programme of Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) is designed to help teenagers understand better the world of armed conflict around them, make them aware of the necessity of humanitarian norms and spark in them an interest and responsible involvement in local and international events. By exploring ethical and humanitarian issues arising from armed conflict, EHL seeks to make positive changes in the students' attitude, as a result of their adopting the ideas of respect for life and human dignity, civic responsibility, and solidarity.

The programme is now at various stages of integration into the standard school curricula across the region.

In Macedonia, where a 10-school-hour EHL package has been adopted as a mandatory part of the Civic Culture subject in the senior grade of primary schools, final preparations have been made to build the teachers' competence to explore humanitarian law with their students. Having already produced the EHL Handbook for Teachers and a practical guide to coping with strong emotions which may arise in the process, Macedonia's Bureau for Education Deve-

lopment is finalizing the cycle of teacher training.

It contains two main elements. One is, naturally, about bringing the basic IHL closer to the teachers and students. This, as Skopje teacher Biljana Smilevska puts it, results in looking at armed conflict, its rules and responsibilities, from an entirely new perspective. The other component is about teaching methods, which, through a variety of forms, encourage students to participate in class-work as actively as possible.

EHL in Albania is now awaiting a political decision based on the recommendations of the Analytical Report prepared by the Ministry of Education Working Group, based on the Testing in Real School Environment in 13 schools throughout the country.

In Serbia, the education authorities have also recognised the subject of Civic Education as the best milieu for EHL, but in secondary rather than in primary schools. In order to assist the Institute for Education Development in finding the most suitable place for EHL, an expert round table was held in late October at the IHL Centre of the Faculty of Political Science, where recom-

mendations of experienced teachers and educators, mostly from Serbia, but also from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and Slovenia, were presented and discussed. Their conclusion was that EHL should be integrated in secondary schools as a 9-school-hour block in Civic Education.

The Montenegrin Institute for Education has adopted a somewhat different approach by designing a 35-school-hour curriculum for an optional subject in the final grade of primary schools. For those who do not select this subject, EHL is offered as a 9-hour extracurricular activity. So far, the subject teachers of roughly half of Montenegro's primary schools have been trained to explore humanitarian law with their students and some of them have already started it.

EHL Origin:

EHL was created by the ICRC and the Education Development Centre (EDC) from Boston, USA. Introducing adolescents, 13-18 years of age, to the basic rules of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the programme is run in more than 90 countries worldwide.

IHL in Academic Circles

IHL GETS REGION TOGETHER AGAIN

Fourth Regional Course on International Humanitarian Law held at Belgrade's Faculty of Political Sciences in late September 2007



(PHOTO: © ICRC)

Speaking to an always packed audience

For the fourth time in as many years, Belgrade's Faculty of Political Sciences played host to some 30 advanced students of law, political sciences and police academies from 17 academic institutions from across the region, who attended the 4th Regional Course on International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The Course, which took place between September 23 and 28, is an annual academic event aiming at providing an opportunity for the interested students from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia to enhance and practice the knowledge of IHL acquired at their regular courses. The lecturers are top IHL

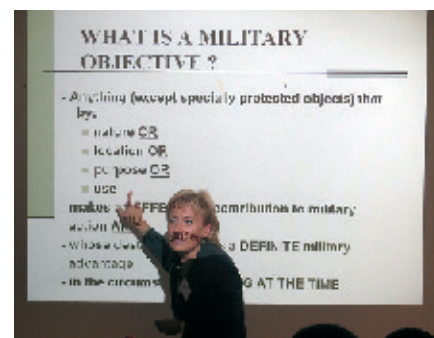
experts and practitioners, and this year they came from Universities of Geneva, Warsaw, Zagreb, Belgrade and Nis, as well as the ICRC and the Red Cross of Serbia.

The Course was conceived as a series of lectures covering all the major IHL issues applying in modern conflicts, including those arising in peace operations and the "war on terror". The lectures were followed by the students' analysis of the evolving crisis in the imaginary region of "Oasis", where the fictitious states of Alfa, Omega, Delta and Sigma got embroiled in various conflict situations with many legal ramifications, presenting the students with the challenge of applying their knowledge to "real life" circumstances (treatment of prisoners, targeting media outlets and religious sites, child soldiers, cluster munitions and many others). And, since in certain cases violations of IHL were committed by the warring parties, a tribunal had to be set up in order for those responsible for the breaches to be put to justice, and the students acquired the experience of representing the prosecutor and the defence council in a war crimes court.

This year's Course also commemorated the anniversaries of the Hague Conventions (100 years) and the Additional Protocols (30 years) with an expert panel examining the adequacy and relevance of the IHL rules adopted in more or less distant past to the modern conflicts. Leading international law experts from Ljubljana, Zagreb, Geneva and Belgrade dealt with the question of "old rules for new wars?" in its different facets, including new actors such as private military companies, the role of national and international war crimes courts, and the current challenges the IHL is facing in contemporary world.

Quote from a student

"It was great to learn things together, exchange experience and make friends with students from all former (Yugoslav) republics - some of whom were, at one point, even at war with each other - and, based on it, perhaps modify your own views on war, humanity, winning and losing sides... Diversity is really nice," says Jelena Lovrek, a student from Zagreb Law Faculty, who took part in the Course.



(PHOTO: © ICRC)

A range of topics was discussed in detail

Photo Gallery - 4th Regional IHL Course



(PHOTO: © ICRC)

Panelists included both local and international experts



(PHOTO: © ICRC)

Students listen attentively to ICRC's Antoine Bouvier



(PHOTO: © ICRC)

Rubbing shoulders with colleagues from across the region



(PHOTO: © ICRC)

In the end, Attendance Certificates were awarded

News in brief

NEW PHV CYCLE IN MACEDONIA

From October 25 to 27, a preparatory workshop of the programme known as *Red Cross in Action / Promotion of Human Values (RCA-PHV)* was held in Struga, Macedonia. The event marked the start of the programme's new 2007/08 cycle. During the workshop, a plan for the upcoming activities was created as well as the teams that will lead the next four regular workshops. The so-called "collegium" was refreshed and new members

were selected to participate in activities as trainers and co-trainers. One of the RCA-PHV trainers took part in a project presentation given to the representatives of the Albanian education authorities and the Albanian Red Cross.

SEMINAR ON "SPECIFICS OF IHL"

On September 20 and 21, a seminar on the "Specifics of International Humanitarian Law" took place in the Macedonian capital of Skopje. The seminar was organ-

ised within the framework of the regular training curriculum of the Macedonian Academy for the Training of Judges and Prosecutors for a selected target group of judges, prosecutors and legal staff from different administrative levels. The co-organisers were the Ministry of Justice, the Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance & Training (OPDAT) within the US Department of Justice, OSCE and ICRC. This forum was also assisted by both local and international IHL experts.

News in brief

►► MOOT COURT IN B-H

Between November 3 and 7, an international moot-court competition in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) was organised by the ICRC Sarajevo Delegation on the picturesque mountain of Bjelasnica, in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Law students from Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria, but also from as far as Estonia, took part in this interactive way of studying IHL. After four days of acting out a case-study situation, based on a fictitious armed conflict between the countries of Amber and Avalon, and arguing their case before a mock tribunal, the Montenegrin team came out the winner, beating their Estonian rivals in a close fought final round on November 7.

REGION'S TRACING SERVICES MEET

For the first time, the persons in charge of the tracing services in the national societies / local Red Cross (RC) units from all countries of former Yugoslavia (except Slovenia) got together in late October, in Opatija, Croatia, in a meeting organised by the ICRC and the Croatian RC. The objective was to provide a forum for participants to exchange experiences, discuss issues of common interest, and encourage cooperation and coordination, regionally and bilaterally. Topics ranged from RC involvement in the Missing file to the RFL Strategy for the Movement. Participants concluded that such opportunities for exchange were greatly needed and should become regular events.

IDENTIFICATIONS IN CROATIA

In late October, two identification sessions of mortal remains of persons gone missing during the 1991-95 Croatian conflict were organised at the Zagreb Forensic Institute. Family members from Croatia and Serbia positively identified 28 sets of human remains belonging to their missing relatives. All of the 32 family members from Serbia who arrived at the Institute for identification were transported there by the ICRC. During the identification process - the first after July 2006 - they identified the remains of twenty of their deceased relatives. The first burial of the remains identified on this occasion took place already on November 15, 2007.

MISSION: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



What the ICRC does in the region:

Missing Persons:

Collects and consolidates information that might help the responsible authorities to clarify the fate of persons gone missing during the conflicts in the region, and to recover their remains. Offers legal advice to the governments on how to legislate in favour of the families of missing persons so that the legal obstacles caused by the absence of a missing person can be overcome, allowing the family to get on with their lives.



Promotion of IHL:

Promotes the knowledge and implementation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), especially with the armed and security forces, and national authorities responsible for integrating IHL into national legislation.

Introduces IHL as well as humanitarian values into the curricula of public education with its Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) and Promotion of Human Values (PHV) programmes for adolescents.

Supports academic institutions in promoting IHL and international exchange of IHL experiences.



Cooperation with National Red Cross Societies:

Contributes to building and maintaining the capacity of the National Red Cross Societies to promote IHL, the principles and humanitarian values of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Consolidates the National Red Cross Societies' capacity to restore family links as part of the worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent tracing network. Strengthens the National Societies' capacity to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from armed conflict or internal strife.

Assists the National Society in coping with other humanitarian activities, such as dealing with problems posed by the still present risk of mines and explosive remnants of war.



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