

## VENEZUELA

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS CARACAS REGIONAL DELEGATION

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2019



C. Bastidas/ICRC

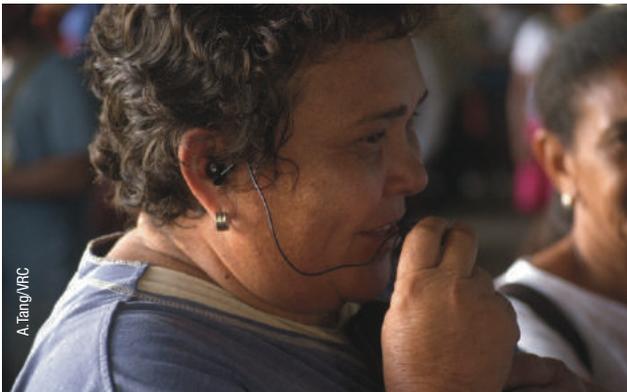
In 2019 Venezuela experienced an increase in social tensions, and its economic and social situation deteriorated, giving rise to a shortage of essential goods, health care, and other essential services, which directly affected the most vulnerable. In response, the ICRC expanded its activities to support those most in need, such as those affected by violence, the injured and the sick, detainees and migrants.

The ICRC abides by the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, and works in a transparent manner with the authorities, in cooperation with the Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

In addition to its humanitarian work in Venezuela, the ICRC supports several activities on the islands of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao and Trinidad and Tobago, where it works to improve the protection of vulnerable groups, such as migrants who have been detained or separated from their families.

# RESTORING FAMILY LINKS

The Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme aims to help people who have been separated from their families by providing them with information on the whereabouts of their loved ones and helping them to re-establish contact. RFL also aims to prevent this separation from happening in the first place. This programme, coordinated by the ICRC, is run in close cooperation with the Venezuelan Red Cross and with the active participation of their volunteers.



A woman talks to her relative from the Venezuelan Red Cross stand at the bus terminal in San Fernando de Apure. Volunteers offer free communication services at 18 locations across Venezuela to help restore contact between travellers and their families.

The RFL programme has 23 focal points, and more than 550 VRC volunteers who offer their services daily and free of charge.

In Venezuela:

- Family separation prevention services were provided:
  - Through 18 permanent communication stands (in bus terminals, public squares, etc.) and multiple temporary mobile stands in different communities. Migrants were provided with a total of 18,603 services, which included 6,187 calls made, 10,752 mobile phone batteries charged and 1,664 Wi-Fi connections used.
  - More than 100,000 guidance booklets were distributed to travellers, with information on self-care and how to prevent family separation. In addition, a national communication campaign was carried out to spread the word about the RFL’s services.

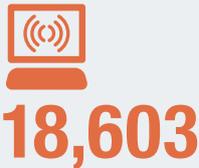
- Separated family members found answers:
  - Relatives of 65 people approached the ICRC in Venezuela to open a tracing request, and 16 people were located. In other countries of the region, relatives of 59 people contacted the ICRC to find their relatives in Venezuela. It was possible to locate 26 of them, which amounts to a total of 42 people who restored contact with their relatives.
  - 85 Red Cross Messages were received and 79 were delivered.
  - In Venezuela, follow up was given to 19 cases of children, young people and teenagers who had received visits from the ICRC in other countries.
- Support was given to:
  - Five families for the repatriation of their deceased relatives outside of Venezuela, by means of a contribution to cover travel and funeral expenses.
  - Seven Venezuelan migrants in the region, who received their identity documents.



**VRC VOLUNTEERS**  
offered daily prevention and support services, free of charge, at 23 focal points.



**COMMUNICATION STANDS**  
available at bus terminals and public squares, as well as multiple temporary mobile stands, along the country’s migration route.



**SERVICES**  
provided for migrants, including charging mobile phone batteries and access to Wi-Fi connections.

## DETENTION

The ICRC strives to ensure that detainees receive humane treatment and decent living conditions. To this end, it supports the efforts of authorities to improve general detention conditions in compliance with national and international standards. In Venezuela, the ICRC began visiting detention centres to make sure that people deprived of their liberty were being treated with dignity.

- Since the ICRC delegation resumed this activity in March 2019, 48 visits were made to a total population of 7,931 persons deprived of their freedom in 9 detention centres. In addition, 238 individual cases received followed up.
- Eleven families of persons deprived of their freedom received financial assistance to cover the funeral expenses of their deceased relatives.
- Respective embassies were notified of the detention of 21 foreigners.
- At the detention centres, 370 Red Cross Messages (RCM) containing brief family news were received; and 70 RCMs with family members' responses were delivered to detainees.
- The ICRC provided travel assistance to the relatives of 164 people deprived of their freedom, to facilitate visits.
- The ICRC organized 2 days of phone calls so that detainees could contact their relatives. In total, 1,784 phone calls were made.



7,931

**DETAINEES** were visited in 9 prisons across the country.



10,193

**HIGYENE SETS** were distributed in 7 prisons.

- 10,193 hygiene kits were distributed in 7 detention centres. The ICRC distributed 4,600 mats and donated cleaning products and kitchen utensils at 2 detention centres.
- In 6 prisons, 8,220 water purification tablets were delivered, which gave 6,754 people deprived of their freedom access to clean water.

## HEALTH CARE

In cooperation with the authorities, the ICRC supported the work of medical staff in the emergency rooms of public hospitals, through training courses and the provision of medical supplies and equipment. It also helped to strengthen pre-hospital care, facilitated the work of the VRC's rescue teams, Civil Protection, firefighters and other national associations. In addition, the ICRC ran health promotion and prevention activities, as well as offering primary health care for communities affected by violence. A comprehensive emergency response to the malaria outbreak in the state of Bolívar is underway.

### Medical supplies and patients

- 320 tons of medical supplies were imported.
- The ICRC supported the work of 71 health establishments:
  - 36 hospitals.
  - 9 primary health-care centres.
  - 19 diagnostic and treatment centres for malaria in El Callao.
  - 4 clinics in prisons.
  - 22 pre-hospital services (first aid, emergency care on public roads).
- A total of 344 medical supplies were delivered, thanks to which:
  - 50,233 people received curative and preventive care.
  - 91,980 critical, injured and multiple-trauma patients were treated in emergency rooms.
  - 7,583 people injured in emergencies and/or public demonstrations received care.
  - 10,922 people deprived of their liberty received curative care.
  - 90 medical kits for treating multiple-trauma patients were delivered in 36 public hospitals in the Capital District and in the states of Miranda, Aragua, Carabobo, Bolívar, Táchira, Apure, Amazonas, Mérida, Zulia, Nueva Esparta, Anzoátegui and La Guaira.



To respond to the needs of the population affected by malaria in El Callao, Bolívar- state, the ICRC delivered 50,000 mosquito nets to the community in 2019.

- In order to provide medical care, the ICRC gave out 120 basic preventive and primary care kits (IEHK) during public health interventions. Nine outpatient units received monthly medical supplies, which enabled them to provide primary care to communities in the states of Miranda, Bolívar, Táchira, Zulia and Apure.
- More than 200 medical kits and basic equipment for pre-hospital care were delivered to 13 of the VRC's offices, 6 Civil Protection offices, the Fire Department of Caracas and the local organization "Ángeles de las Vías". (ADLV).

### **Malaria**

- 45,800 people were treated for malaria.
- An entomological and susceptibility study was carried out for the first time in El Callao, with the ICRC's support. Based on these results, 50,000 mosquito nets were distributed (in addition to hundreds more in other areas of the country), covering 98% of the population. A campaign to promote and prevent malaria was run alongside the ICRC's response actions to help the affected population.
- Training was received by: 150 health promoters, 50 professionals in the rapid diagnosis/treatment of simple and complex malaria, and 15 individuals in malaria microscopy.
- 50 high-tech microscopes were provided for centres in the Bolívar, Apure and Zulia states, as well as for research institutes in Bolívar and Aragua.

### **Hygiene and infection control**

- Every month, the ICRC delivered cleaning materials and products to 6 hospitals, 9 health-care centres and 5 diagnostic and treatment centres for malaria.
- By providing 360 mattresses, the ICRC helped to increase the admission capacity of 4 public hospitals. In addition, it provided armchairs for the nebulization rooms (used for respiratory illnesses) and to the blood donation units.
- To improve epidemiological monitoring and records, a total of 20 laptops, 20 voltage regulators, 20 briefcases, 6 printers and 10 video projectors were distributed in 4 hospitals, 3 situational rooms and a public health institute.

### **Professional training**

- 950 health professionals received training in how to treat patients with advanced trauma (by participating in an ER multiple-trauma care course).
- 127 health professionals were trained in how to surgically care for patients injured by firearms and explosive devices.
- 139 participants from 4 hospitals received training on the use of ultrasound for trauma, in courses taught by ICRC specialists.
- With the aim of enhancing primary care, 60 doctors and 30 nurses were trained in the treatment of diarrheal diseases.
- Nine pre-hospital care professionals including paramedics, nurses, doctors and emergency technicians, were sent abroad to attend an international course on mass emergency care and triage, sponsored and taught by the ICRC.
- 309 people received first-aid training, and medical bags and stretchers were donated.



320

**TONS OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES** imported by the ICRC in order to support the work of 71 health establishments.



50.000

**MOSQUITO NETS** distributed in a malaria-prevention campaign in El Callao (Bolívar-state), which covered 98% of the population.



195,596

**INJURED OR ILL PEOPLE** received treatment.



90

**MEDICAL KITS** provided for multi-trauma patients in 36 public hospitals.



30

**HEALTH-CARE CENTERS** supported through infrastructure improvements.



120

**PRIMARY CARE KITS** were given out during health workshops in the states of Miranda, Bolívar, Táchira, Zulia and Apure.



200

**MEDICAL KITS** pre-hospital care delivered to 13 Venezuelan Red Cross offices.



110

**PIECES OF MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC EQUIPMENT** delivered to 5 public hospitals in the states of Miranda, Táchira, Bolívar and Aragua. 112 pieces of biomedicine equipment were also repaired.



150

**HEALTH PROMOTERS** trained in how to prevent malaria, 50 professionals trained in the rapid diagnosis and treatment of simple and complex malaria, and 15 individuals received training in malaria microscopy.

**Medical equipment:** in order to foment the quality of care in emergency rooms and critical areas, the ICRC:

- Repaired 112 pieces of biomedicine equipment;
- Delivered 110 pieces of medical diagnostic equipment and protective equipment, as well as maintenance tools to 5 public hospitals, in the states of Miranda, Táchira, Bolívar and Aragua;
- Facing a paediatric emergency, the ICRC repaired the reverse osmosis plant of the “Dr. José Manuel de los Ríos” children’s hospital dialysis unit, for which it provided maintenance for a period of 6 months (including 3 trainings for personnel and the provision of supplies required for maintenance until November 2020).

# WATER AND SANITATION

The Water and Habitat Programme’s priority objective is to help to preserve water supply systems and sanitation services for the population affected by violence and the consequences of violence. The projects, which include viable proposals and solutions, are run in cooperation with the corresponding technical authorities and institutions. A systemic and sustainable approach was adopted to mitigate the repercussions of violence so that those affected can enjoy essential services and decent living conditions.

### Infrastructure improvements and maintenance

- In cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the General Directorate of Health of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela (DIGESALUD), support was given to improve the infrastructure of 26 hospitals and 4 outpatient units, with the capacity (more than 5,500 beds) to provide care for thousands of people.
- In the Capital District and its surroundings, 9 hospitals received emergency assistance through the donation and installation of electricity backup equipment (power generators), so that critical medical care is not interrupted by power cuts.
- Ten hospitals and 4 outpatient units in the states of Aragua, Carabobo, Anzoátegui, Táchira, Apure Zulia, Miranda, La Guaira and the Capital District received timely infrastructure improvements for the supply of water, electricity, air conditioning, and sanitation. This ensured compliance with the minimum standards for the provision of emergency medical services to multiple-trauma and dialysis patients, as well as in support departments (laboratories and X-rays), operating rooms and intensive care units.
- Support was provided for assessing the well refurbishment plan in 6 Hospitals of the Capital District, in cooperation with HidroCapital, and for the urban drinking water service for priority infrastructures. In addition, in close cooperation



**10**  
**HOSPITALS** and 4 outpatients units benefitted from improvements made to their water supply, electricity, air conditioning and sanitation.



**9**  
**POWER GENERATORS** (from 125 to 1,266 kVA) donated to hospitals.



**140,000**  
**PEOPLE** benefitted from repairs made to Ciudad Bolivar’s drinkink water supply network, carried out in cooperation with HidroCapital.

The ICRC team at work in the San Antonio del Táchira bus terminal to improve access to water for the 30,000-plus people who pass through there each day.



ICRC staff inspects one of the 9 power generators that were donated by the institution to 9 hospitals, in order to prevent interruptions in medical care for critical patients.



with HidroBolívar, repairs were made to Ciudad Bolívar's distribution network to improve the supply of drinking water, which will benefit 140,000 people and the main local health-care centre.

- To guarantee access to essential water and hygiene services for the vulnerable population in transit through the Colombian-Venezuelan border, improvements were made to the infrastructure of the San Antonio del Táchira bus terminal, the bathrooms were refurbished, and access to water for the 30,000-plus people who pass through there each day was guaranteed.
- 75,000 people received a donation of water purification tablets for treating water in their homes.

#### Prisons

- The ICRC managed to improve access to water in the Fénix Lara Penitentiary Community and the David Viloría Penitentiary Centre (Lara state), by repairing a water hole and distributing 24,000 litres of water via tankers, which brought benefits for 4,332 people deprived of their liberty. In addition, a project for the repair of the water distribution and internal sanitation system in the David Viloría prison was initiated.

- Prison conditions, infrastructure, and access to water in 7 civil and military centres were evaluated in cooperation with the authorities and in compliance with ICRC's standards. In addition, a regional seminar on good practices and international standards in detention and prison infrastructure was organized.
- The pumping system and internal drinking water supply was repaired at the National Institute for Women's Guidance (INOF, Miranda state), from which 610 people deprived of their liberty will benefit.

#### Professional training

- In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Venezuelan Institute of Social Security (IVSS) and the General Directorate of Health of the FANB (Digesalud), two round-table discussions were held on corrective and preventive maintenance between the maintenance coordinators and administrators. The aim was to standardize materials and provide mutual support in areas pertaining to labour force and equipment. Thirty people from 15 health-care centres took part.



**75,000**

**PEOPLE** benefitted from the delivery of water purification tablets in their homes.



**4,332**

**PERSONS DEPRIVED OF FREEDOM** benefitted from the renovation of a water well and the distribution in construction materials and equipment.



**15**

**HEALTH-CARE CENTRES** participated in two round-table discussions aimed at establishing standards in construction materials and equipment.



Angeli, a volunteer from the Venezuelan Red Cross, teaches inhabitants of a community in Petare how to wash their hands correctly to avoid getting diseases. The ICRC and the Venezuelan Red Cross work together to offer primary and preventive health care to vulnerable communities in Venezuela.

## PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE VENEZUELAN RED CROSS AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

In order for the work of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in response to the growing humanitarian needs in Venezuela to have a greater impact, the Venezuelan Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the ICRC work closely together to promote the complementary nature of their actions, and to optimize the use of their skills and available resources. The ICRC supports the VRC's branch offices and central office by providing training in different areas, developing adapted security and protection protocols, strengthening their operational capacity, and providing equipment for volunteers.

- 400 volunteers from 14 VRC offices were trained in operational risk management and safety issues.
- 5 generators were donated to support the first aid and emergency response services of the VRC.
- Emergency food and drinks were provided to 8 VRC offices to enable first-aid teams to assist those affected during the demonstrations.
- 3 vehicles and 13 motorcycles were donated to the VRC to enhance their emergency response capacity. As part of the maintenance of the VRC's fleet, 17 vehicles were repaired (including 6 VRC ambulances).
- The VRC received donations in the area of telecommunications (satellite internet services were set up in 10 offices, VHF/UHF repeaters in 4 offices, and mobile phones and laptops given to 8 offices).
- Identification material was provided for the VRC's volunteers.



**400**

**VOLUNTEERS** from 14 VRC offices were trained in operational risk management and safety issues.



**8**

**VRC OFFICES** received emergency food and drinks for first-aid teams.



**6**

**AMBULANCES** belonging to the VRC were repaired, and 3 vehicles and 13 motorcycles were donated.

# PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The ICRC supports dialogue with arms bearers in order for them to become familiar with and apply international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international standards on the use of force in their activities, and so that they can facilitate emergency interventions. The ICRC also prioritizes conversations and communication with members of civil society, and to this end it raises awareness about its activities and disseminates humanitarian principles in different communities, local authorities, schools and NGOs.

## Armed Forces: training

- At the Bolivarian Military University of Venezuela, 117 officers were trained in how to include content on the use of force in the curricula of military educational centres.
- Seventy-eight officers from the National Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela (FANB) participated in train-of-trainer courses on the use of force.
- 1176 officers from the National Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela were educated on the principles of IHL and the international standards on the progressive use of force during operations to maintain law and order.
- Nine generals participated in the Seminar on IHL and the use of force for high-ranking officers of the General Inspectorate of the FANB.
- Twenty-five officers participated in a consolidation course for instructors on the use of force.
- Seventy-eight FANB officers participated in the workshop on the use of force in operations to maintain law and order in the states of Zulia and Táchira.

## National and state police forces: training

- The ICRC sent 3 speakers to an International Seminar on Peace Zones (*Cuadrantes de Paz*) and Human

Rights, IHL and the Progressive and Differential Use of Force, in which 285 officers from the National Police Corps received training.

- Seven hundred ninety-eight officers from the strategic, tactical and operational levels of the Bolivarian National Police and the Miranda, Táchira and Bolívar States took part in the seminars on the international standards on the use of force.

## Civil Society: training

- Several sessions and meetings were held with community leaders, local stakeholders and non-governmental organizations to promote acceptance of the ICRC's work and facilitate its access to people affected by violence. More than 1,200 people learnt about the work of the ICRC.
- One hundred fifty-seven teachers, administrative staff and NGO workers who live and work in vulnerable communities received training from the ICRC on safe behaviours.
- During an event organized by the United Nations (UN) in Caracas, representatives of 50 NGOs attended a session on the "principles that guide humanitarian action and its characteristics."

# ECONOMIC SECURITY

In 2019, the ICRC worked closely with community stakeholders in the implementation of food security and job training programmes.

- Two hundred people in vulnerable situations and residents in communities affected by violence, received vocational training in different trades such as bakery, barbering, hairdressing, crafts and computing.
- In the states of Táchira, Zulia, Bolívar and the Capital District, 7,658 people (mostly children, elderly

people and nursing or pregnant mothers) were served by 29 community-based canteens supported by the ICRC.

- Three homes offering protection and assistance services to migrants and unaccompanied minors in Táchira and Bolívar received donations of essential goods and equipment from the ICRC.



Workers in a school canteen in Petare, Caracas, receive a donation of kitchen utensils and equipment. The ICRC works closely with these institutions in the Capital District, Miranda, Táchira, Zulia and Bolívar.

## FORENSIC SERVICES AND HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT

The ICRC offers advice, support and training to forensic experts and authorities in Venezuela to mitigate the effects of the high rates of violence and lack of maintenance, resources, training and personnel in the forensic system. In doing so, it promotes the use of best scientific practices and helps to ensure suitable and dignified oversight of deceased persons, the search and identification of missing persons, and communication with the affected families.

- More than 200 public officials from the National Service of Medicine and Forensic Sciences (SEMAMECF), the Scientific, Penal, and Criminal Investigations Corps (CICPC) and of the Public Ministry participated in conferences on: the best forensic practices for identifying and handling corpses; the search for missing persons and the support given to their families (organized in partnership with SEMAMECF/Ministry of Interior, Justice and Peace).
- Ten SEMAMECF headquarters received supplies such as biosafety equipment, refurbishment materials for repair work in electrical, cooling and water systems. In addition, the X-ray equipment belonging to the Bello Monte morgue was repaired.
- Forty-two unidentified or unclaimed bodies were buried in an orderly and dignified manner, with the ICRC's support and provision of body bags.
- The ICRC helped authorities to transport genetic samples for identifying missing persons in a shipwreck, and to repatriate deceased individuals.
- Eight families with missing members received advice from the ICRC regarding forensic identification processes.



**200**

**OFFICIALS** participated in conferences on the best forensic practices for identifying and handling corpses, the search for missing persons and support given to their relatives.



**10**

**SEMAMECF HEADQUARTERS**

received supplies, such as equipment and material for repairing electrical, cooling and water systems.



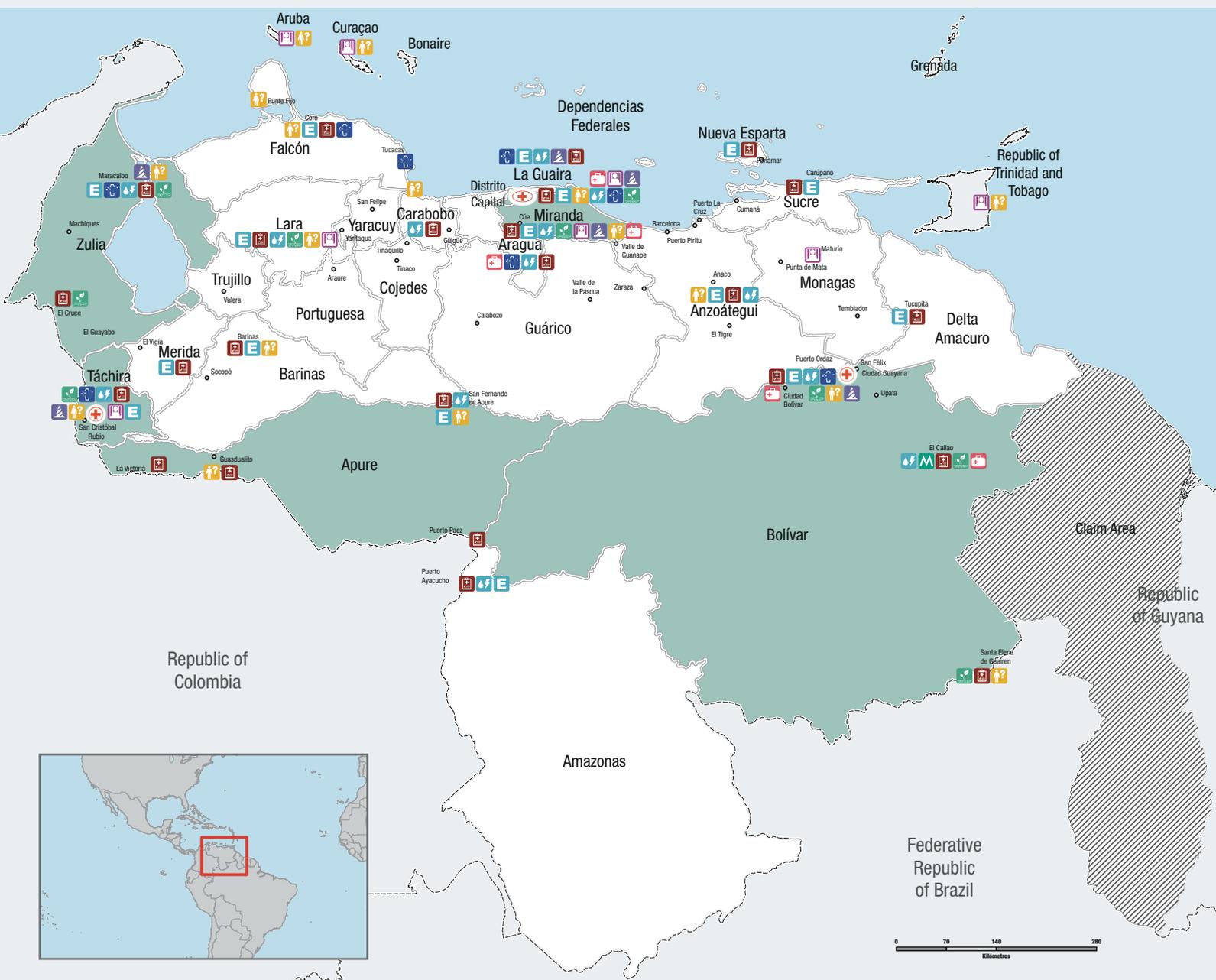
**8**

**FAMILIES** with missing members received advice from the ICRC regarding forensic identification processes.

- Three VRC and Civil Protection members participated in the first International Course on the Management of Dead Bodies after Disasters.

# ICRC ACTIVITIES ON VENEZUELA, TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, ARUBA, BONAIRE AND CURAÇAO

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2019



- |  |                               |  |   |  |                     |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--|---------------------|--|-------------------------|
|  | Medical Supplies and Patients |  | Forensic Services   |  | Regional Delegation |  | Priority States         |
|  | Malaria Response              |  | Economic Security   |  | Sub-Delegation      |  | International Border    |
|  | Trainings                     |  | Detention   |  | Settlements         |  | Administrative Entities |
|  | Medical Equipment             |  | Promotion of International Humanitarian Law and Humanitarian Principles |  |                     |  | Claim Area              |
|  | Water and Habitat             |  | Restoring Family Links  |  |                     |  |                         |

# CARIBBEAN (ISLANDS OF ARUBA, BONAIRE, CURAÇAO, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO)

The ICRC's work in this region focuses on immigrant detention and RFL. The organization engages in bilateral dialogue with authorities on issues concerning migration, international law and protection mechanisms applicable to vulnerable groups.

In addition, the ICRC works in cooperation with the National Societies and offices of each of the islands to strengthen their skills, with a particular focus on RFL services and assisting migrants.

- The ICRC made 6 visits to three immigration detention centres in Aruba, Curaçao and Trinidad and Tobago, where it met with more than 200 migrant detainees, and individually followed up on 25 cases.
- It facilitated 211 international phone calls between detained foreigners and their relatives.
- It held a confidential dialogue with authorities about the conditions of detention, how detainees are treated and procedural safeguards, and followed up on individual cases.
- In terms of the RFL services, following contact made with the ICRC, a search was undertaken for 44 people, 23 of whom were found. In addition, 33 messages were exchanged between separated family members.

*\* Please Note that the data provided in this document are being verified at the time of publication (02/2020).*

We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything we can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. We also seek to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.

## Caracas Regional Delegation

Av. Mohedano, entre 1.<sup>a</sup> Transversal  
de la Castellana y Calle Los Granados.  
Edif. Euro Suites Mohedano,  
Caracas, Venezuela. 1060  
caracas@icrc.org  
© ICRC, January 2020



 [facebook.com/icrc](https://facebook.com/icrc)  
 [twitter.com/CICR\\_ve](https://twitter.com/CICR_ve)  
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