



AN OVERVIEW

ICRC ASIA AND THE PACIFIC COVID-19 RESPONSE IN 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR

In a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and its dire consequences for health care, economies and the well-being of populations around the world, I would like to share with you the contribution that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) teams made in several critically affected countries in Asia and the Pacific during 2020. The efforts were aimed at supporting communities and the authorities in trying to prevent, control and manage the effects of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable.

Though we have stepped into 2021, the pandemic is far from over. With the second and third waves striking many nations across the world, countries continue to rely on restrictive measures and lockdowns to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. As I write this, more than two million people have lost their lives to COVID-19 worldwide and the confirmed cases have surpassed 97 million. Of these, 14.5 million confirmed cases and more than 228,000 deaths have been reported from Asia and the Pacific.

At the same time, there is a glimmer of hope in the vaccination campaigns that have unrolled in many countries. We are advocating to ensure that people affected by conflict and violence, who might otherwise be forced to the back of the queue, have an equitable access to the vaccine. Similarly, other marginalized communities like the internally displaced people, migrants, asylum seekers and detainees must be taken along in this journey towards immunization.

The ICRC, together with our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Society partners, is ready to support national vaccination campaigns and facilitate access to the COVID-19 vaccine for those in difficult-to-reach vulnerable and marginalised populations in countries affected by armed conflict and violence.

To continue supporting the efforts of local communities and authorities to respond to COVID-19 and other vulnerabilities, the ICRC is appealing for CHF 2.3 billion in 2021. That this is our largest-ever budget highlights the reality of the growing needs that we are witnessing in many countries. A significant part of this budget, including in the Asia-Pacific region, will be allocated to coping with the mid- to long-term impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable communities.

In the following pages, you will find the scope of our response in the Asia-Pacific region in 2020, ranging from providing support to hospitals and improving sanitary conditions in prisons to aiding the efforts of National Societies and in the forensic expertise involved in the dignified management of dead bodies. As part of our COVID-19 response in the region, at least 150 hospitals, 630 prisons, numerous detention and isolation facilities and police stations, 47 physical rehabilitation centres and over 34 camps for displaced populations have been supported in Asia-Pacific during the year.

Even as they continue to work hand in hand as and with responders despite challenging personal and professional circumstances, I am proud of my colleagues' efforts in helping increase proximity to the communities that were left even more vulnerable due to the pandemic. Moreover, I am thankful for the generous political and financial support we have continued to receive from all of you.

With the hope that 2021 will be an easier year for us all, especially those in the most vulnerable situations,

Yours,
Christine Cipolla
Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific

Disclaimer:

The information contained in this document only reflects ICRC's direct response to the pandemic. The data captured herein may differ from that in our Annual Report 2020 by virtue of different reporting timelines.

STATISTICS ON COVID-19 FOR THE ASIA-PACIFIC

14,412,593

TOTAL CASES

13,562,290

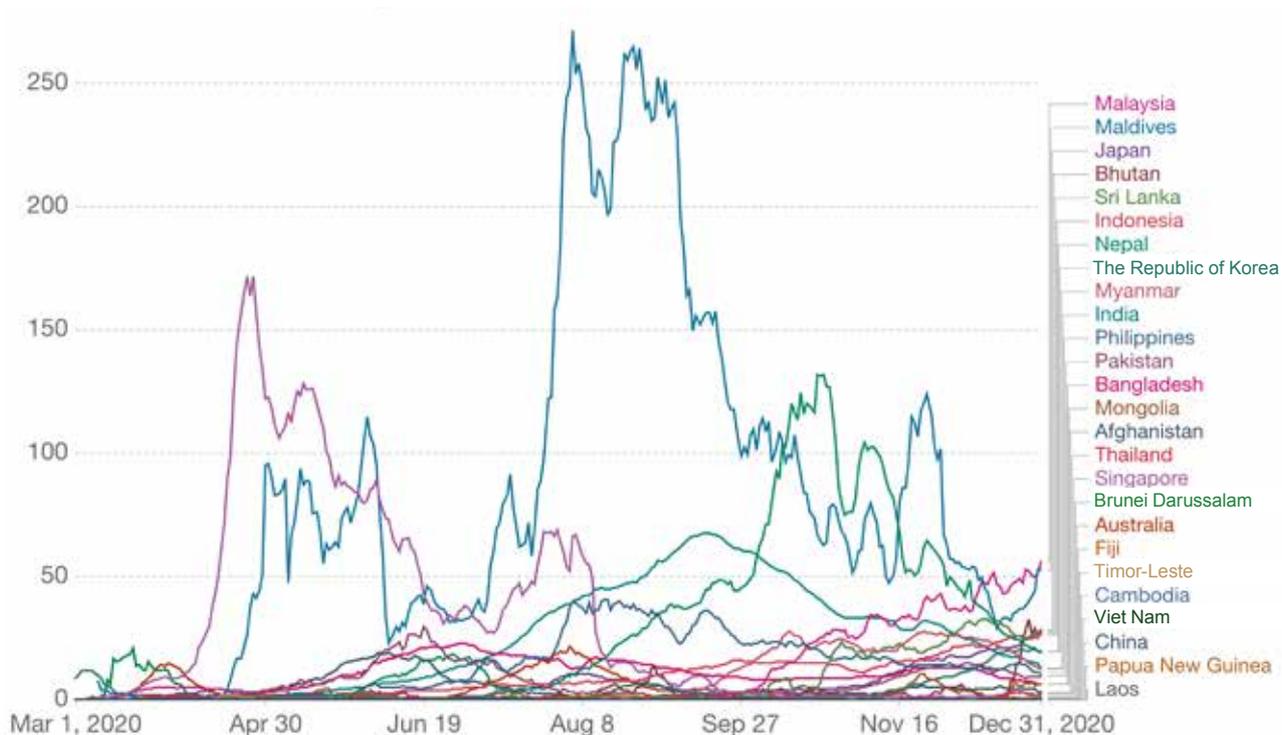
TOTAL RECOVERED

228,877

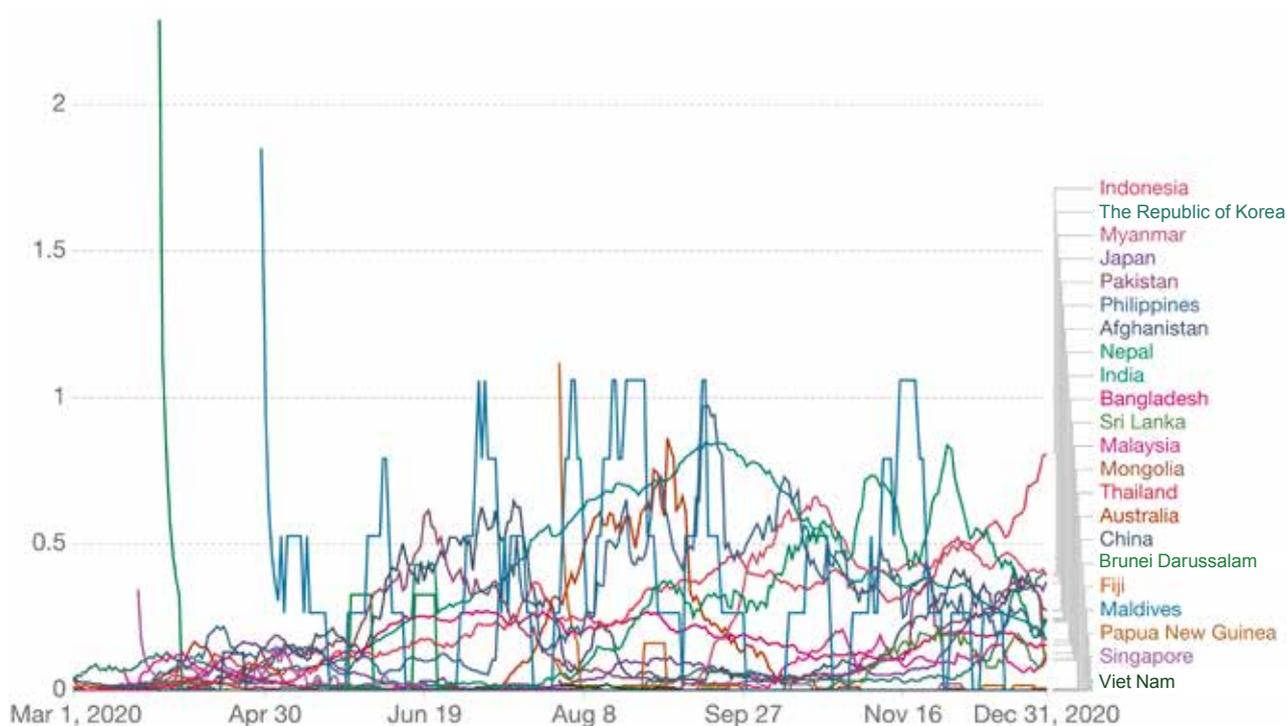
TOTAL DEATHS

*Figures related to COVID-19 as on 20 January 2021

NUMBER OF CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION FROM 1 MARCH TO 31 DECEMBER 2020**



NUMBER OF CONFIRMED DEATHS LINKED TO COVID-19 IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION FROM 1 MARCH TO 31 DECEMBER 2020**



* Source: Johns Hopkins University (Coronavirus Resource Center) <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

**Source: Max Roser, Hannah Ritchie, Esteban Ortiz-Ospina and Joe Hasell (2020) - "Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)". Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus> [Online Resource]

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth some extreme realities for health-care workers worldwide. As a community, they have come forward and put themselves on the front line, providing care to those who need it the most, often putting themselves at risk.
- Extending support to the medical community and strengthening the health-care systems, we have distributed tonnes of PPE items and essential material across the Asia-Pacific regions.
- Working in partnership with the authorities, we have also tried to address the critical issue of stigma that many health-workers have been exposed to in the face of COVID-19.

SUPPORTED:



DISTRIBUTED:



A. Sanggacala/ICRC

Staff and volunteers of Philippine Red Cross (Lanao del Sur-Marawi chapter) deliver hygiene material for COVID-19 community quarantine facility in Barangay Sagonsongan, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur. The hygiene kits form part of the ICRC's overall support to PRC's COVID-19 response.

INFECTION-CONTROL IN DETENTION FACILITIES

- Detention facilities – which are often overcrowded, have poor hygiene or lack ventilation – pose a grave challenge when it comes to preventing and containing infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Under international humanitarian law, detainees' health and hygiene must be safeguarded, and sick detainees must receive the medical care and attention required by their condition.
- In view of COVID-19, we worked with authorities to strengthen infection-control measures, including testing new arrivals for the virus and improving the hygiene conditions (e.g. by installing hand-washing stations, providing soap and other washing equipment, and creating isolation wards), in order to control the spread of disease.



An ICRC staff member demonstrates the correct way to disinfect surfaces during a training session for public health officers at Correctional Center 1, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

HUMANITARIAN FORENSICS

- Due to COVID-19, the ICRC has adapted its existing forensics activities and programmes to ensure we help address the growing needs concerning the dead, their families, and those working to protect and manage the dead.
- Working along with the government authorities, funerary services, forensic experts and NGOs, we have focused on devising specific protocols related to COVID-19. This includes dignified management of the bodies and material support, including body bags and infection prevention and control items.

16,318
BODY BAGS



A. Bastian/PMI

The ICRC, together with Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI), carry out a simulation on handling bodies of those who died due to COVID-19.

PARTNERING WITH NATIONAL SOCIETIES

- In disease outbreaks, particularly in the case of COVID-19, facts, not fear, help people protect themselves and their loved ones. The Red Cross and Red Crescent family is educating the public about the coronavirus, sharing information about preventive measures in order to prevent misinformation and reduce rumours.
- In the Asia-Pacific region, 39 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies along with thousands of volunteers have been working tirelessly to extend the required support to multitudes of people at the grassroots. Apart from helping build capacities of the staff and volunteers, we are extending financial and material support to these National Societies.

166,739
POSTERS



319,200
LEAFLETS



39
NATIONAL
SOCIETIES



- **CAPACITY-BUILDING AND TRAINING SESSIONS**
- **VOLUNTEER NETWORK**



K. Hayat/ICRC

A training session on COVID-19 preparedness under way at Kabul District Hospital. The training workshops have been jointly organized by the Afghan Red Crescent Society and the ICRC to increase the readiness of health workers to meet pandemic-related needs.



ICRC PRESENCE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

Cover image: With ICRC support, 350 tailors stitched over 123,000 fabric face masks in just two weeks for the displaced families in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

Disclaimer:

The boundaries, names and designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement, nor express a political opinion on the part of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned. Maps are not to scale.

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