



# THE ICRC IN FORTALEZA

FACILITATING RESPONSES  
TO THE HUMANITARIAN IMPACTS  
OF ARMED VIOLENCE



ICRC

# THE ICRC IN BRAZIL

The ICRC's Regional Delegation for Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay is based in Brasilia, and includes a mission in Buenos Aires and offices in Boa Vista (RR), Fortaleza (CE), Rio de Janeiro (RJ) and São Paulo (SP).

The ICRC in Brazil conducts activities and works in partnership with local governments and organizations to respond to and promote responses by authorities' to the humanitarian needs of the population in three key priority areas:

## **Armed Violence**

Partnering with local authorities, aims at developing strategies to prevent and minimize the effects of violence on people's lives.

## **Missing persons and their families**

Supports endeavors towards identifying and understanding the needs of relatives of missing persons and provides recommendations and support to the relevant authorities to help them develop responses fit to these needs.

## **Migrants**

Assists migrants in keeping contact with their families through the Restoring Family Links (RFL) program.

The ICRC also promotes International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law and humanitarian principles in the region, in addition to cooperating with the National Red Cross Societies.



## THE ICRC IN CEARÁ

The ICRC began working in Ceará in 2018 to help respond to the humanitarian impacts of armed violence on the population. The organization focuses on partnering with authorities and civil society in Ceará to take on issues related to restrictions on access to essential public services, people deprived of their freedom, missing persons and their families and displaced persons.

The Fortaleza city government signed a technical support agreement with the ICRC in April of 2018 to initiate the Safer Access program (SAF) to Essential Public Services. In an effort to encourage the promotion and integration of International Human Rights Standards into law enforcement, there have been technical cooperation agreements signed with the Department of Public Security and with the Municipal Department of Citizen Security and the Fortaleza Municipal Guard.

In April 2019, a memorandum of understanding was signed that included SAF and the promotion and integration of international standards for human rights into police duties. The agreement also facilitates cooperative and meaningful work with the Ceará authorities on detention conditions and the treatment of persons deprived of their freedom, and includes the search, localization and identification of missing persons and measures to serve the needs of their families.



## USE OF FORCE

The ICRC works with Public Security officials to stress the significance and necessity of respecting International Human Rights Standards applied to policing roles as a way to prevent and reduce the number of victims of armed violence. As such, it encourages the integration of law with the incorporation of International Standards and the use of force into institutional documents in the areas of education (Training and specialization courses), doctrine (procedure manuals on regulations governing operations) and training, as well as into the internal mechanisms for controlling police activity.

After a technical cooperation agreement was signed, the ICRC and the Public Security Department administered a course for Training Instructors on Human Rights related to the Role of Police in 2018. New courses are being taught in 2019 by the State Academy of Public Security.

In 2019, the ICRC and the Municipal Department of Citizen Security and the Fortaleza Municipal Guard (GMF) entered into a technical cooperation agreement to share educational activities and knowledge among GMF officials related to International Human Rights Standards and others activities.



## MENTAL HEALTH

In partnership with the Fortaleza Municipal Government, the ICRC introduced the “Cuidando de Quem Cuida” (Caring for the Caregivers) program in 2019 with the intention of reducing the impact that violence has on professionals working in environments affected by armed violence and who, because of their professional practice, are susceptible to developing stress, depression and anxiety.

The program offers self-care sessions and training in Basic Psychological Support for professionals from Health, Youth, Social Care and Education Municipal Departments. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the mental health of these professionals while they conduct their work activities and to develop their crisis intervention, active listening, empathy and stress management skills. The program also stimulates the creation or improvement of Mental Health protocols in relation to critical incidents arising from armed violence.

## INTERNAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Forced displacement in cities is a central humanitarian concern. With this in mind, the ICRC strives to understand the problem and tailor responses to those affected. In Fortaleza, the problem is assessed through dialogue with authorities and other key actors on the issue in an effort to offer support to them on solutions that benefit the affected population.



## SAFER ACCESS

Safer Access to Essential Public Services is a methodology that encourages changes in awareness, behavior and the attitude of professionals and managers who need to cope with risks related to armed violence, allowing them to be effectively, efficiently and coherently managed.

The methodology was created to improve the overall effectiveness of services and enhance the use of human and financial resources. Above all, the idea was to broaden access to essential public services like health, education and social assistance in environments affected by armed violence by making sure that professionals have free access to the communities and the people living there can have access to the service facilities.

Compliant with the guidelines and policies of the international ISO 31000 Risk Management Standard, Safer Access has been adapted based on the ICRC's security protocols. Safer Access was drafted in accordance with the ICRC's extensive experience working in environments affected by armed conflicts and violence. The methodology was rolled out in six cities in Brazil: Fortaleza, Duque de Caixas, Florianópolis, Porto Alegre, Vila Velha and Rio de Janeiro.

Safer Access protocols are constructed by local teams after they undergo training. These local teams are trained by the Services that are part of the networks and that are in direct contact with people in the communities who are exposed to situations of violence in various territories.



The ICRC helps people that have been impacted by armed conflict and other situations involving violence throughout the world by doing everything possible to protect their lives and dignity and to alleviate their suffering, often in cooperation with Red Cross and Red Crescent partnerships. The organization also strives to prevent suffering by promoting and empowering International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and defending universal humanitarian principles.

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