

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) IN THAILAND



Timeline

1975

First permanent the ICRC delegation opens an office in Bangkok to help those affected by the Indochina War.

1979

Khao-I-Dang transit camp opens for Cambodian refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border.

2003

The ICRC Bangkok delegation expands into a regional delegation covering Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam.

2004

The ICRC begins visits to detainees held in relation to the situation in southern Thailand.

2011

Income-generating program was launched in southern Thailand to assist families who have lost a breadwinner due to violence or incarceration.

Country context

The ICRC has been present in Thailand for 40 years, carrying out a range of activities in South East Asia region to alleviate the suffering caused by conflict and other situations of violence in accordance with its humanitarian mandate. It also actively promotes adherence to international humanitarian law.

In the Southern Border Provinces, unrest continues to affect the life of population. Thailand continues to be a major country of transit and destination for migrants. Irregular migrants are held in shelters and immigration detention centres nationwide. Occasionally, civilians affected by the conflict in Myanmar continue to move across the border in Thailand to seek medical treatment and better or safer living conditions.

Protection of people deprived of their liberty

The ICRC regularly helps foreign irregular migrants detained in Immigration Detention Centres re-establish contact with their families using the worldwide Red Crescent/Red Cross Movement's network. In addition, upon detainees' request, the ICRC teams notify their respective consular services of their detention.

At present, the ICRC services to people deprived of their liberty in places of detention under the responsibility of Department of Corrections are discontinued on the request of the detaining authorities. The ICRC services aim to secure humane treatment and conditions of detention for those deprived of their liberty, regardless of the reasons for their arrest and detention. Following an initial assessment of the situation, the ICRC establishes a bilateral and confidential dialogue with the concerned authorities – with the aim of improving general condition of detention and treatment of detainees whenever needed – where it shares its findings and provides recommendations. In certain situations, the ICRC can respond directly to needs, with the agreement of the authorities, by providing individual assistance or engaging in infrastructure repair. In some situations, the ICRC facilitates family visits for those held far from their relatives.

The ICRC also supports the participation of prison authorities in regional conferences to exchanges views and best practices on the management of the penitentiary system. Since 2014, the ICRC has become a strategic partner of Asian Conference of Correctional Facilities Architects and Planners, an annual conference initiated by Ministries of Justice of Thailand, Japan and Malaysia to share experiences in order to make prisons more effective correctional centres.

People affected by conflict or unrest

The ICRC assists people affected by conflict or unrest impartially, neutrally, and independently. In Northern Thailand, the ICRC assists weapon-wounded from Myanmar by covering the costs of medical treatment carried out in Thai hospitals and conducts surgical trainings for Thai medical workers along the Myanmar border. In 2016, first-aid training was carried out with ethnic Karen volunteers from Myanmar for the first time. In Thailand's Southern Border Provinces, technical and financial assistance for income-generating activities is provided to families whose breadwinner has either died, been seriously injured or been taken into detention due to the situation of unrest. This assistance is also provided to former detainees in order to facilitate their reinsertion into the

society. The ICRC is in regular contact with the people most affected by the unrest, monitoring their needs and engaging in a confidential humanitarian dialogue with those involved in the violence, with the aim of mitigating its consequences on the general population.

Promoting international humanitarian law

The ICRC conducts workshops with Thai academic institutions to simulate interest in international humanitarian law among students. It also promotes humanitarian rules applicable to naval warfare and Maritime Security Operations. Senior naval officers from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Thailand, have been supported by the ICRC to participate in the regional workshop on the Law of Armed Conflict at Sea held every year.

The ICRC continues to have bilateral dialogue with the government aiming to promote Thailand's ratification and implementation of international humanitarian law and its related treaties.



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In 2015, at the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Thai government indicated a willingness to establish a national international humanitarian law committee. It also expressed a willingness to become a party to Additional Protocol I, and to discuss the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Arms Trade Treaty.

With the purpose to ensure protection of persons who are not involved in the violence, the ICRC regularly holds seminars and workshops for senior military and police officers. The goal is to promote awareness of international and domestic standards and rules for use of force in law enforcement operations.

Working with Thai Red Cross

Founded in 1893, Thai Red Cross is one of the largest humanitarian organisations in Thailand. As member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements, the ICRC has been working with Thai Red Cross to enhance understanding of humanitarian principles. The due use of Red Cross emblems has been promoted so that Thai Red Cross can also encourage awareness among the Thai public. The ICRC is sponsoring Thai Red Cross medical staff for first-aid trainings in Geneva, Switzerland. Their medical staff are also encouraged to be deployed in the ICRC's international missions.

In the case of natural disasters like the floods of 2011, the ICRC supported Thai Red Cross in providing emergency relief in flood-stricken provinces.



Harinna, whose husband was detained on security allegations, can now earn a living with a sewing and embroidery machine provided by the ICRC. Pattani province (2013).



The ICRC delegate addresses senior naval officers from Asia Pacific at a regional workshop on the humanitarian rules applicable to the laws of armed conflict at sea (2015).

What we do:

- Assist vulnerable people in the Southern Border Provinces to start small businesses with the ICRC provided tools, equipment and training.
- Cover the costs of treatment for weapon-wounded patients from Myanmar in Thai hospitals.
- Promote humanitarian principles among students at private Islamic schools in Southern Border Provinces.
- Work with senior military officers who participate in lectures and trainings on international humanitarian law.



During the floods of 2011, the ICRC helped Thai Red Cross provide victims in Tak province with relief parcels containing dry food, torches and mosquito repellent (2011).



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