

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) IN VIET NAM



Timeline

1965

The ICRC delegates deployed to Saigon providing humanitarian support during the Viet Nam war, including in places of detention.

1975

First permanent office opens in Hanoi.

1989

The ICRC begins training sessions on international humanitarian law to Vietnamese armed forces. Physical rehabilitation centre supported by the ICRC opens in Ho Chi Minh City.

1993

Office in Viet Nam closes and activities are covered by the ICRC Regional Delegation in Bangkok.

2015

The ICRC seeks to re-open an office in Hanoi.

Country context

Decades after the conflict in Viet Nam, explosive remnants of war continue to contaminate the land threatening people's lives and impeding development. More than 350,000 people are still listed as missing and pollution from herbicides like Agent Orange continue to affect the population. Recognised as country prone to natural disasters, Viet Nam's 3,200-kilometre coast is battered by up to 10 storms a year causing loss of life and damage to property. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea/East Sea continue to make headlines.

Recognition of international humanitarian law

All over the world, the ICRC encourages states to ratify and implement international humanitarian law treaties. The ICRC regularly seeks dialogue with governments, universities, armed forces and police to promote understanding of international humanitarian law and for its inclusion in trainings and curricula.

In Viet Nam, the ICRC works closely with the armed forces (army, navy and peace-keepers) organising courses on international humanitarian law. Every year, the ICRC sponsors high-ranking officers to take part in regional and international conferences, including the major Asia-Pacific regional seminar on the Law of Armed Conflict at Sea.

The ICRC also works with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Viet Nam Red Cross organising seminars on topics related to humanitarian law as well as sponsoring officials to attend conferences.

The ICRC is currently working with academic institutions in Viet Nam to incorporate international humanitarian law into the curriculum. Every year it supports law students from universities to take part in an ICRC moot court competition, including the annual Regional International Humanitarian Law Moot Court Competition in Hong Kong.

Partnering with Viet Nam Red Cross

The ICRC works closely with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies globally to ensure a concerted and rapid response to armed conflicts or situations of violence as well as dealing with the legacy of conflict.

The ICRC provides financial and technical support to Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) that allows VNRC to train, prepare and respond to any emergency. The partnership with VNRC focuses mainly on strengthening its programmes on mine risk education and support to victims of unexploded ordnance, as well as the correct use of Red Cross emblems and the adoption of Safer Access Framework, which is the set of guidelines that will improve their safety in sensitive and insecure situations. The ICRC has also been supporting VNRC in the restoration of family links and tracing missing persons.

The ICRC, in co-ordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, also supports members of the leadership of VNRC to take part in regional or international conferences and meetings.

Building forensic capacity

When people die during wars or natural disasters, or while migrating, the remains of unknown individuals must be recovered and identified, their bodies handled respectfully and with dignity.

In Viet Nam, the ICRC organized two sensitization workshops on how to manage the dead in humanitarian emergencies for forensic doctors in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City in co-operation with National Institute of Forensic Medicine (NIFM). In the future, the ICRC will provide training to the authorities on the management of the dead during emergencies (logistics, recovery, transport, storage, identification). The ICRC sponsors forensic experts to attend international courses related to forensic science and translates the ICRC publications on forensics into Vietnamese. Discussions have also begun to draft guidelines on the Management of the Dead during emergencies.



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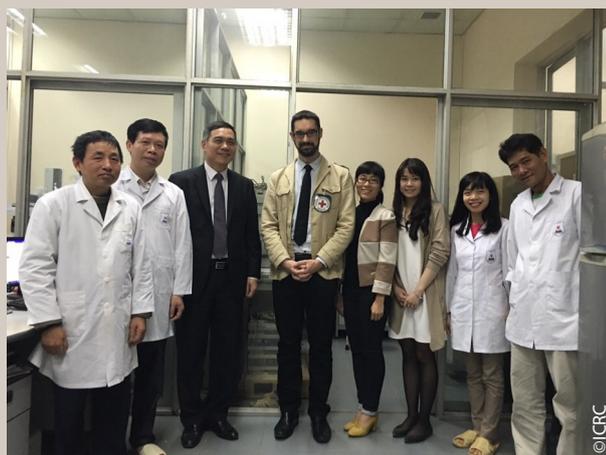


Recent Highlights:

- Supporting awareness programmes in areas contaminated by the explosive remnants of war and assisting victims.
- Providing training on international humanitarian law to Vietnamese UN peacekeepers prior to deployment.
- Working with academic institutions to support their teaching of international humanitarian law.



Senior Vietnamese naval officers taking part in seminar on international humanitarian law organised by the ICRC in Ho Chi Minh City (2016).



Engaging in dialogue and organising seminars are part of the ICRC's effort to build forensic capacity in the country. Here, an ICRC forensic specialist meet with Vietnamese forensic doctors at National Institute of Forensic Medicine in Hanoi (2016).

MISSION STATEMENT

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 armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance.

The ICRC 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 Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

The ICRC regional delegation in Bangkok covers operations in Thailand, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam.



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