

ICRC REGIONAL DELEGATION BANGKOK

ASEAN Workshop on UXO, October 2014, Laungprabang, the Lao PDR

ACTIVITIES IN 2014

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) first established a presence in Thailand in 1975 to support its operations in the country as well as in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam. Today, the ICRC seeks to protect and assist vulnerable populations, visits detainees, where it supports the authorities in improving prison management, and helps meet the needs of disabled persons through physical rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes.

It raises awareness of humanitarian issues and supports National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in developing their capacities in international humanitarian law (IHL) promotion, family-links services and emergency response.

It promotes the ratification and implementation of IHL treaties and IHL integration into military training regionwide.

VISITING DETAINEES

The ICRC visits places of detention in times of armed conflicts as well as in times of peace. The visits aim to assess the conditions of detention and treatment of detainees, re-establish contact between detainees and their families when needed and, together with detaining authorities, seek solutions to issues of humanitarian concern. Vulnerable people – security detainees, irregular migrants, sick, elderly, women and minors – receive particular attention. Material assistance, such as hygiene kits and recreational items, is usually distributed by the ICRC in the places of detention.

In Thailand, the ICRC is present in 32 places of detention housing 82,000 detainees including those arrested in connection with the violence in the South and irregular migrants. The ICRC works with authorities in addressing needs in the penitentiary system, focusing on healthcare and water and sanitation, with the shared goal of improving the conditions of detention and offering a better working environment for prison officers.

- In 2014, the ICRC conducted 74 detention visits in selected prisons countrywide. Other 14 visits focusing mainly on health-related aspects were carried out.
- The ICRC supported central and local authorities in improving the health conditions of 7,000 detainees in four selected prisons through facilitating detainees' access to healthcare and provision of necessary hygiene kits in coordination with the public health system and systematic visits.
- Over 8,400 detainees in seven prisons and one correctional centre for drug addicts have improved access to safe drinking water and functioning sanitation facilities following infrastructure rehabilitation.

In Cambodia, the ICRC offers a confidential forum for government's stakeholders to discuss and address issues of humanitarian concerns in places of detention, particularly the issues of overcrowding. The General Department of Prisons (GDP) staff enhanced the quality of health services by taking note of ICRC recommendations regarding general access to health care and individual medical cases.

- The ICRC conducted 25 detention visits focusing on general conditions of detention and 14 other visits focusing specifically on detainees' access to healthcare, in selected prisons in Cambodia in 2014.
- The outing time to exercise and get fresh air for detainees has generally increased in prisons nationwide.
- The regular provision of hygiene items supported these initiatives, benefiting over 12,000 detainees including more than 2,000 women and 812 prison officials in selected prisons housing the majority of detainee population nationwide.
- In parallel, the GDP Construction Office strengthened its capacities to assess and address prison infrastructure issues during ICRC-supported field missions and staff training.
- Nearly 12,300 detainees in 18 prisons enjoyed improved living conditions, kitchen, and water and sanitation facilities constructed or rehabilitated by the GDP/ICRC.

In the Lao PDR, in 2014, the ICRC was given access to the Drug Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centre, also known as the Somsanga Centre, in Vientiane, where the ICRC helped build a borehole to improve its water system and rehabilitated the centre's kitchen facility.

Lao officials also benefited from the ICRC-supported study tour to Cambodian prisons where they observed the concrete measures taken by the GDP to improve the prison system.

In regional level, the ICRC encourages synergies among Asian countries. Since 2014, the ICRC has been a strategic partner of the Asian Conference of Correctional Facilities Architects (ACCFA), which was created by architects from the Ministries of Justice of Thailand, Japan and Malaysia. The ICRC is currently supporting ACCFA to organise their 4th Conference in February 2015 in Myanmar, which will bring together representatives from 11 countries in the region.



ICRC Thai Blog

The Thai-language blog features stories of the ICRC and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement from the region and beyond. Easy-access reference on various humanitarian topics are there for you to discover - including the full text of the Geneva Conventions and other useful links to our main Geneva-based resources. Readers can also enjoy our interactive contents and updates live from Geneva and across the globe with a host of Thai publications readily accessible in e-format. www.icrc.or.th



ICRC



RESTORING FAMILY LINKS (RFL)

*Cambodian RC volunteer is collecting a Red Cross Message from a detainee's family to send it back to Thailand via the Red Cross network.
Kanya Chimroylarp/ICRC*

Separation is a problem whenever there is natural disaster, armed conflict or other situation of violence, or irregular migration. It tears the families apart and its consequences are felt for decades. The ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies work together around the world to locate people and put them back into contact with their relatives. This work includes looking for family members, restoring contact, reuniting families and seeking to clarify the fate of those who remain missing. In 2014,

- 354 Red Cross Messages (RCMs) from foreign detainees were collected by the ICRC in Thai prisons and sent to the families through Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies in almost 50 countries.
- The ICRC offered 1,411 short phone calls to the families of Bangladeshi and Myanmar migrants detained in immigration detention centres in Thailand.
- In June, during the exodus of Cambodian workers occurred after political change in Thailand, the Thai Red Cross offered medical services at the border and the Cambodian Red Cross offered 879 RFL phone calls to the Cambodian returnees wanting to inform their families about their safe arrival.
- 121 detainees in southern Thailand and in Bangkok received ICRC-sponsored visits from relatives living far away. ICRC covered transportation costs for three members per family twice a year. The service has seen an increase of Cambodian and Lao beneficiaries after the respective National Society volunteers were trained on RFL.
- 40 refugees, accepted for resettlement in third countries, received ICRC travel documents issued in coordination with the IOM, UNHCR and embassies concerned.
- About 20 Viet Nam Red Cross representatives from five disaster-prone provinces in Viet Nam attended the country's first RFL in a disaster workshop in August.
- In September, 24 Lao Red Cross participants benefited from the 2nd national RFL capacity building workshop, held in Vientiane.

See more at: <http://familylinks.icrc.org>



COOPERATING WITH RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

With their wide network of staff and trained volunteers spanning their countries, the region's National Societies are indispensable partners for the ICRC. The ICRC and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) continue to provide support to the National Societies in times of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies.

In 2014, partnership has been strengthened, among others, through improved capacity-building dynamics with a view to assisting victims of violence and vulnerable communities, including those in areas affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and natural disasters. In this regard, the Cambodian and Thai National Societies adopted the Safer Access Framework, a structured approach to safety and access during crisis, as part of an improvement to their emergency response capabilities. The region's National Societies underwent training courses in international humanitarian law (IHL), Restoring Family Links (RFL), mine-risk education, and managing and assisting internally displaced persons (IDPs) with around 525 participants.

The ICRC technical and material support enhanced the National Societies' ability to conduct orientation courses on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, humanitarian principles and action, IHL and first aid to almost 5,000 Red Cross officers and various target audiences.

ASSISTING THE VICTIMS OF ARMED VIOLENCE

The ICRC continues to monitor and address the effects of violence on civilians in southern Thailand and along the Thailand-Myanmar border. Regular contacts with leaders of armed groups from bordering Myanmar states and with Thai authorities allow the ICRC to discuss humanitarian concerns, such as anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnant of war (ERW), child soldiers and medical access for the weapon-wounded persons.

- 24 weapon-wounded people from Myanmar seeking treatment in Thailand had their expenses covered by the ICRC.
- The ICRC collaborated with the Thai local medical NGOs, Global Health Access Program (GHAP) and the Karen Department of Health and Welfare, on a 10-day trauma management course held in northern Thailand targeting medics working along the Thailand-Myanmar border.
- A War Surgery seminar was jointly organised with the Thai Red Cross and Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in southern Thailand to develop expertise in war surgery with 15 doctors, surgeons and nurses attended.
- The ICRC also fosters ASEAN regional cooperation on the assistance of people affected by the unexploded ordnance (UXO). In October, the ICRC in conjunction with the Lao PDR's Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the ASEAN Secretariat, organised a workshop in Luang Prabang, which saw 24 experts from Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam attended to discuss national policies and share best practices in assisting the victims of UXOs.

Victims of violence rebuild their lives through Micro Economic Initiatives



When Harrina's husband was arrested, she lost all source of income. The ICRC assisted her by providing her a sewing and stitching machine. She was soon able to open her business. She now makes enough money to take care of her daughter, regularly visits her husband in prison and provides for his daily fees.
Olivier Matthys/ICRC

Micro-Economic Initiatives (MEIs) are income-generating projects implemented through a bottom-up approach, whereby each beneficiary is involved in identifying and designing the assistance to be received. The beneficiary is at the heart of the decision-making process. It helps both increase respect for the beneficiary's dignity and greater ownership project by the beneficiaries themselves. An MEI consists of one or a combination of three interventions: vocational training, productive grants and micro-credit support.

- In southern Thailand, 72 heads of household (approx. 432 people), mostly wives of detainees, ex-detainees or those who have lost their breadwinner in a violent-related incidents, started small businesses such as food stalls, farming or sewing, with training and material support from the ICRC.
- Since 2013, the ICRC and the Lao Red Cross have been supporting victims of unexploded ordnances (UXOs) in the southern provinces of Attapeu and Sekong where over 30 families have benefited from income-generating activities ranging from agriculture and livestock rearing to trade and crafts. Fifteen new MEI programmes have been implemented in 2014.

Disabled people benefit from ICRC's physical rehabilitation programme



Patients queue up for treatment at the Physical Rehabilitation Center, Battambang, Cambodia. Olivier Mathys/ICRC

UXOs continue to pose a threat to rural communities in Cambodia. Survivors, among the recorded 60,000 casualties, and other physically disabled people still need regular physical rehabilitation and/or medical care.

In Cambodia, the ICRC supports two physical rehabilitation centres (PRCs) located in Battambang and Kampong Speu and a Phnom Penh-

based orthopaedic component factory, which have been handed over to Cambodia's Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) since 2010. The factory supplies the orthopaedic components free of charge to the two aforementioned centres and also 11 physical rehabilitation service providers in Cambodia.

- Over 10,000 disabled people received appropriate orthopaedic services including prosthesis to replace or support limbs, wheelchair and physiotherapy services. The patients received free accommodation and food during their stay at the PRCs; the ICRC has borne the transportation costs.
- Senior staff and technicians from the orthopaedic component factory and from the two ICRC-supported PRCs in Cambodia further developed their capacities through mentoring and capacity building workshops.
- The Battambang physical rehabilitation centre benefited from the services of a prosthetist/orthotist specialist who had just completed a three-year advanced training course abroad, supported by ICRC.
- Outreach activities and dissemination campaigns conducted during 264 field trips raised awareness of the available service at the two ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres. With more than 8,200 patients assessed/assisted by outreach teams, some 170 patients received further treatment at the centres via referrals.

The ICRC thus puts its effort in the social reintegration programme for disabled patients to help them integrate back to their society with dignity.

- 58 patients received vocational training with the help of a Cambodian-based NGO, Jesuit Refugee Service, specialised in this field.

BUILDING RESPECT FOR THE LAW

Another aspect of the ICRC's work includes reminding authorities and others of their legal obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL). The ICRC contributes to the development of this area of law and offers its expertise and practical experience of conflicts to help governments meet their responsibilities by passing legislation, training the armed forces and the police and promoting IHL at universities and among young people. In 2014, workshops and lectures were held in Thailand and the Lao PDR.

Weapon bearers are briefed on humanitarian norms

The ICRC delegates are regularly in contact with military and police units at all levels to obtain access both to areas where people need help and to people who have been detained. The ICRC employs former military and police officers to work with the armed forces and police. The aim is to have the relevant rules of IHL and IHRL incorporated into training and operational procedures. Where possible, the ICRC makes similar approaches to other weapon bearers, in particular the armed groups fighting the authorities.

- The ICRC provided sponsorship for five officers from the Royal Thai Navy and five officers from Viet Nam's Navy High Command to attend regional-level workshops on law of armed conflict at sea and the rules of engagement, held in Singapore and Australia respectively.
- One officer of the Judge Advocate General's Department, Ministry of Defence, Thailand, was supported by the ICRC to attend the international-level workshop, Rules of Engagement Workshop, in Italy in September 2014.
- A new collaboration has been initiated with the Peace Training Centre of the Royal Cambodia Armed Forces (NPMEC) and the Peace Operation Centre of the Thai Armed Forces with the training of the group of officers selected to leave for UN missions (pre-deployment briefing).
- 24 senior police officers and 12 military officers in southern Thailand strengthened their awareness on law enforcement in military operations and international standards on policing, humanitarian principles, Red Cross Emblem and the ICRC mandate in a workshop. In Cambodia, 70 Police trainers and 34 Gendarmes (crowd-control police) were able to enhance their knowledge on similar subject matter including the exercise of police powers.
- 50 participants from the Royal Thai Army attended a workshop on New Weapons and New Actors under IHL, jointly organised by the ICRC and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In Vientiane, the ICRC delivered two workshops, held in May and December, on enhancing the understanding of humanitarian principles and the relevant legal framework. 45 senior officers from the Lao PDR's Ministry of National Defence benefited from the workshops.

The Geneva Conventions of 1949 protect the victims of war. States are obliged to ensure respect for the Conventions and to make sure the law is widely known and understood.

COUNTRY	YEAR OF SIGNING
Thailand	1954
The Lao PDR	1956
Viet Nam	1957
Cambodia	1958



IHL Seminar with the Royal Thai Armed Forces in Bangkok

RTA/ICRC

Reaching out to the youth

The ICRC's education and outreach programmes build awareness of IHL among young people. These education programmes aim at fostering respect for the notion of human dignity and at familiarising young people with IHL and humanitarian action.

The ICRC has developed a programme called Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL), now used in some 70 countries. It explores the ethical and humanitarian issues arising during armed conflicts, building on young people's own experiences wherever possible.

- The ICRC conducted 18 EHL-based sessions in five selected private Islamic schools in areas of the Far South of Thailand.
- 60 students from southern Thailand attended an ICRC lecture on IHL in Conflict Areas organised by Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus.



Reaching out to governments, the civil society and media sectors

Regionwide, government authorities, staff of diplomatic missions, ASEAN national secretariats and civil society actors, particularly NGOs, academia, Islamic institutions and, in the case of Thailand, community/religious leaders in the South, enhance their knowledge of humanitarian principles, IHL and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement through dissemination sessions and bilateral meetings.

In November, senior correspondents and media representatives from South and Southeast Asia debated about humanitarian issues and challenges faced by humanitarian organisations during a 2-day conference in Hiroshima, Japan.

- In the Lao PDR, 60 representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Justice and Public Security participated in an IHL lecture on cluster munitions. The event was jointly organised by the ICRC and the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane.

University students test their grasp of IHL

By encouraging universities to include IHL in some courses and by supporting lecturers who teach it, the ICRC reaches out to tomorrow's future decision-makers, opinion leaders, among others. In 2014, university students from Cambodia, Thailand and, joining for the first time, the Lao PDR and Viet Nam participated in the 12th Hong Kong IHL Moot Competition, a regional competition. Students from seven universities in Viet Nam participated in the country's 2nd National IHL Moot Competition and the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE) in Cambodia held its 7th IHL Moot Competition.



The ICRC legal advisor from Bangkok conducts a session on Preparation for Moot Court at the National University of Laos (NUOL). *Kanya Chimroylap/ICRC*



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Asia Pacific Media Conference 2014 "Reporting on Conflicts and Disasters –The media debates its role", in Hiroshima, Japan. Journalists and ICRC staff shared various points of view based on their experiences.

Meng Chen/ICRC

Humanitarian aid in ASEAN from a Muslim perspective

Muslim scholars in Southeast Asia launched the first publication aimed at reflecting their diverse voices on humanitarian affairs. The publication, launched in December 2014, is an output from the ICRC-supported "Islamic and Humanitarian Affairs: Views and Experiences from Southeast Asia" workshop held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The workshop brought together a dozen of social activists and Muslim scholars from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, to share lessons learned from those directly involved in humanitarian work. The tsunami in Banda Aceh, the earthquake in Sumatra and the unrest in southern Thailand are showcased in the publication.



IHL Virtual Reality Tools (VRT)

The ICRC has set up a pilot project in the Bangkok Regional Delegation aiming at creating the new generation of IHL training tools using the latest video games and military training simulators available in the market, with the view of facilitating their diffusion to a large public outside the academic and military circles.

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