

ICRC REGIONAL DELEGATION FOR VENEZUELA AND THE CARICOM STATES

MAY-AUGUST 2018



A. Van Shernbeek/CICR

TRAINING ON STANDARDS FOR DETENTION AND FIRST AID FOR DISPEMIL OFFICERS

During the months of May and June the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Regional Delegation gave presentations on standards for detention directed towards prison officers affiliated with the General Directorate of Military Penitentiary Service (DISPEMIL).

In these training sessions, attended by 300 officials, officers, and guards who work in military prisons, the ICRC shared its vast experience in the area of detention.

In addition, volunteers from the Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC), with support from the ICRC, offered sessions on first aid for the DISPEMIL-affiliated officers who attended these courses.

COURSE ON INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON USE OF THE FORCE

The second “Training of Trainers (ToT) course on the International Standards on the Use of Force in operations to maintain law and order” was held between August 6 and 17 at Forte Tiuna, Caracas.

Laetitia Courtois, head of the ICRC Regional Delegation for Venezuela and the CARICOM states, explained to the group of military and civilian representatives from State institutions such as the Ombudsman’s Office that the course “essentially (focused) on the pillars of the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality and accountability, before, during and after law and order maintenance operations.”

The event was organised by the National Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, a department under the Office of the Inspector General of the National Armed Forces with the support of the ICRC. In future this will allow for all members of the five service branches of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB) – the Navy, Air Force, Army, National Guard and Militia – to receive training on international human rights law applicable to police operations, with a focus on international standards on the progressive use of force and the code of conduct. By the end of 2018, over 2800 members of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces of Venezuela (FANB) will have undergone training.

Over a period of ten days and a total of 115 academic hours, 44 officials received training from use-of-force instructors from Mexico and Bolivia who were invited by the ICRC, four ICRC in-house trainers and three local teachers trained up by the ICRC.

The closing ceremony, in which participants received their diplomas, was attended by the Inspector General of the FANB, Major General Iván Hidalgo Terán, the head of the ICRC regional delegation, Laetitia Courtois, as well as prominent military authorities and other representatives.

Courtois reiterated the ICRC’s commitment to “continue to support all efforts to improve and professionalise the FANB. Each step will have an impact on reducing potential humanitarian repercussions during law and order maintenance operations, both to the population and to members of the police force.”



Inspector General of the FANB, Major General Iván Hidalgo Terán giving the welcome speech to the participants



Military personnel during the International Use of Force Standards practices



Practice session held in Caracas by medical specialists in care of injured patients in the emergency room

EMERGENCY ROOM CARE FOR INJURED PATIENTS

Trauma victims are at risk of losing their lives if they are not offered optimal care upon arrival at the emergency room. This is why the ICRC promotes the training of civil and military health care professionals in emergency room trauma treatment. Between April and July 2018, a total of 78 professionals from public and military hospitals located in Caracas, Maracay and Valencia took part in theoretical and practical sessions.

“The course participants specialise in different areas of emergency care services, and have a key role to play in replicating the course in their respective hospitals, relaying the principles of trauma management to their teams, aiming to enhance the skills of ER professionals and the quality of treatment received by trauma victims in the emergency room,” explains Joana de Barros, the ICRC’s Health Care delegate, responsible for coordinating the courses.

As part of the training, the ICRC supplied the seven participating hospitals with medical supply kits to treat approximately 50 trauma patients. In addition, in the near future, health care specialists from the ICRC will be lending support to health care institutions regarding the correct use of medical supplies and – when the institutions so require – in the proper implementation of trauma management techniques.



First Aid Training conducted in the community of San Agustín, in Caracas

FIRST AID EDUCATION PROVIDED IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

The first steps taken when treating an injured patient can be instrumental to saving their life, which is why the ICRC led basic first aid courses for a group of 49 people from the neighbourhoods of San Agustín and La Vega in Caracas. The courses were also attended by 16 teachers from a technical school that works with young people from these communities, as well as 25 teachers from schools belonging to the Fe y Alegría system in the state of Apure.

Knowledge about how to care for those injured by firearms or penetrating trauma facilitates the work of relief teams during an emergency. For this reason, training on this matter was held for 28 Red Cross volunteers in the Capital District led by a Health Care delegate. In line with the aim of enhancing the skills of the VRC's first aid teams, 22 volunteers from ten branches joined their peers for this training, in which they also learned how to transport injured people on motorcycles.

SUPPORT FOR VENEZUELAN RED CROSS TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In order for the rapid and effective response to emergencies handled by the VRC to be carried out smoothly, a good radio transmission between its volunteers and first aiders is required. Aware of this need, the ICRC lent its support through the acquisition of three VHF repeaters, which were installed in Caracas, Mérida and Barinas, with the objective of strengthening communication between the teams of volunteers, before and during emergency responses.

REDUCING RISKS IN VENEZUELAN RED CROSS OPERATIONS

The ICRC held a risk mitigation workshop for VRC volunteers involved in relief activities. Forty-five volunteers from the VRC branches of Apure, Barinas and Mérida took part. The rescue workers took the opportunity to share experiences about the most common risks that teams face in their relief and rescue activities, such as injuries, traumas, falls and blows, amongst others. They were also informed about the action protocols for reducing the risks to which they are exposed and for ensuring their protection.



Volunteers and Lifeguards of the Venezuelan Red Cross, during their practices in El Tigre, Anzoátegui-state

CARICOM:

RESTORING FAMILY LINKS (RFL)

The ICRC Regional Delegation, in conjunction with the National Societies of the Caribbean Red Cross, has worked towards reuniting family members who have been separated due to migration, detention or natural disasters.

In Nassau, Bahamas, in June 2018, the ICRC organised two regional workshops on Restoring Family Links and activities to help detained migrants, with the participation of the National Red Cross Societies of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, Curacao and the Bahamas.

These workshops were an opportunity for the ICRC to share experiences with the Red Cross National Societies of the Caribbean, in order to optimise their humanitarian response, promoting respect for the rights of migrants, the dignity of those who are detained, and the restoration of links between separated family members.

BAHAMAS:

MEETING WITH AUTHORITIES

The ICRC Regional Delegation and the authorities of The Bahamas organised, in July 2018, a working group meeting to analyse issues related to migration and to identify ways of responding to humanitarian problems. During this meeting, support that both the ICRC and the Bahamas Red Cross could provide to migrants arriving in The Bahamas was also analysed. The ICRC expressed its willingness to guide and provide technical advice to the authorities of The Bahamas in their work of protecting migrants who are in a vulnerable situation.



Representatives of the ICRC Regional Delegation for Venezuela and CARICOM States, along with the Royal Bahamas Defense Forces

33RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CARIBBEAN POLICE COMMISSIONERS

The ICRC Regional Delegation was invited to participate in the 33rd conference of the Caribbean Police Commissioners, which took place in Montego Bay, Jamaica, in April 2018. The ICRC had the honour of making a statement during this conference, which brought together police commissioners and high-ranking officials from throughout the Caribbean region.

Notably, the ICRC maintains a fruitful dialogue with the Caribbean authorities, the police, the military and other interested parties in order to advance their humanitarian activities in the region. The ICRC promotes international humanitarian law, international standards on the use of force in law enforcement operations, respect for the life and dignity of those displaced as a result of armed violence, and for vulnerable migrants.

JAMAICA:

EDUCATION TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON YOUNG PEOPLE

The lives of dozens of young people from communities affected by urban violence in Jamaica have been completely turned around thanks to a special project carried out by the Jamaica Red Cross to reduce violence through its Schools of Transformation.

Since 2007, the ICRC has been supporting these schools, which aim to improve young people's reading, writing and arithmetic skills, to enhance their occupational skills and to equip them with practical professional skills. Currently, more than 70 students benefit from this programme. Additionally, the programme offers Jamaican youth psychosocial support, sports, and life skills, in order to help them develop their conflict resolution and mediation skills.




A School of Transformation session held in Jamaica



The ICRC helps people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything it can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. The organization also seeks to prevent hardship by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and championing universal humanitarian principles.



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