



2019 ANNUAL REPORT CENTRAL AMERICA

EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA



ICRC



ANNUAL REPORT OF CENTRAL AMERICA ACTIVITIES

2018



MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE DISPLACED



PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY



EDUCATION



EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS



MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



THE INJURED AND SICK



SUPPORT TO NATIONAL SOCIETY PROJECTS



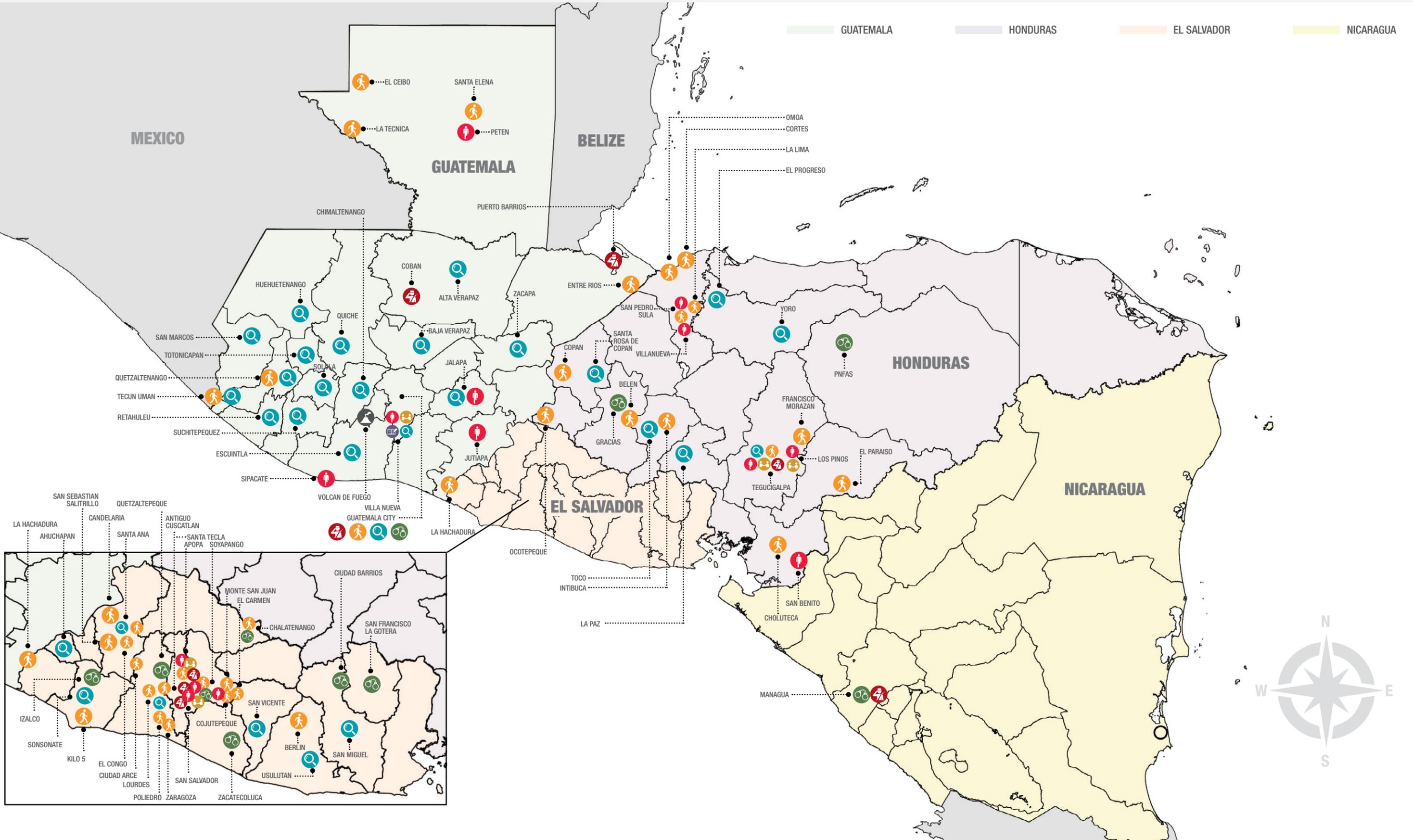
ARMED FORCES AND POLICE

GUATEMALA

HONDURAS

EL SALVADOR

NICARAGUA



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



MIGRATION AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT: AN UNCERTAIN JOURNEY

By Jordi Raich, Head of the Regional Delegation for Mexico and Central America, ICRC

Migrants and people displaced by violence are human beings with rights. While this may seem an obvious assertion to make, the immense suffering endured by people in these situations is an issue that remains in the shadows. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been working for many years now to identify and address the serious humanitarian consequences of displacement and migration, and we are confident that we can all do much more to mitigate their impact in Central and North America.

All too often, the uncertain journey undertaken by migrants and internally displaced people is beset with problems, including the separation of families, the lack of access to health services, abuse, exploitation and even death and disappearance. This report takes a look at where the people who flee their homes come from, who they are and what compels them to leave their roots behind?

In our region, there are a variety of factors that drive migration, including social exclusion, a lack of opportunities, domestic, sexual and armed violence and the wish to reunite with family members already

living in another country. We were able to confirm this first-hand a few months ago when we assisted people travelling with the so-called migrant caravans through the northern part of Central America and Mexico.

The Central American countries have been hardest hit by the tightening of immigration policy in the United States, the main destination country for the region's migrants. In transit countries such as Mexico, while some progress has been made, dialogue with the authorities continues with a view to securing necessary improvements in the areas of arrest and detention.

For migrants to be considered refugees, they must demonstrate that they cannot remain in their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion or for reasons of widespread violence or massive human rights violations. As available resources do not stretch to legal assistance for such large numbers of applications and the legal frameworks now in place have made it increasingly complicated to be recognized as a refugee, the majority of those potentially entitled to asylum do not manage to obtain refugee status.

The protection needs of those who migrate and the composition of migration flows are constantly changing. It is evident that, in today's world, the drivers of human mobility are not purely economic but encompass a range of factors, including family reunification, persecution by gangs and other armed groups and the ensuing climate of insecurity. People are not as likely now to migrate in search of food and a better livelihood; increasingly we see people who migrate to escape dangerous situations, such as the forced recruitment of young people and human trafficking, and in extreme cases to escape death.

Nobody is calling into question the sovereign right of States to determine their own immigration policies, but this power must also be used to protect the lives of the hundreds of thousands of women, men, young people and children who, every year, embark on such perilous journeys.

In 2018, various States engaged in efforts to move towards more humane policies that are more respectful towards migrants, with the negotiation and adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, which seeks to ensure safer migration based on respect for human rights and increase the capacity of these States as new host countries. One such country is Mexico, which has taken steps to increase protection for migrants from Central America, allowing those travelling with migrant caravans to regularize their immigration status on humanitarian grounds.

The initiative was a one-time effort, but this show of good will should set a precedent for the future and chart the way forward. It is consistent with the provisions of the Global Compact for Migration signed in December 2018, aiming to strike a balance between people's rights and a State's power to determine its own immigration policies.

The ICRC works with migrants because they are highly vulnerable. We use a broad description of migrants that encompasses all people who leave or flee their home to seek safety or better prospects abroad and who may be in distress and need of protection or humanitarian assistance. Refugees and asylum seekers, who are entitled to specific protection under international law, are included in this description.

More and better government policies are required to provide the families of missing migrants with the assistance they require and prevent people from being detained solely on the basis of their immigration status, and a commitment is needed to put an end to the detention of migrant children and adolescents. More attention must also be paid to internal displacement, ensuring that a humanitarian approach is adopted in addressing the issues involved.

Based on our experience in the field, we believe that the region's governments can and should do more to fulfil their legal obligations, particularly with regard to the principle of *non-refoulement*, and to ensure a more comprehensive and respectful approach to assisting people fleeing from violence in search of safety and a better future.

HEIRS OF WAR: ISOLATION OR REINTEGRATION?

By Ariane Tombet, Head of Mission, ICRC, Nicaragua
Kian Abbassian, Head of Mission, ICRC, Guatemala
Olivier Martin, Head of Mission, ICRC, El Salvador
Alexandre Formisano, Head of Mission, ICRC, Honduras

Although Central America ceased to be the scene of wars between armed forces and guerrilla groups several decades ago, social tensions and armed violence remain worryingly rampant and widespread. The inhabitants of some of the countries in the region, trapped in a seemingly endless spiral of violence, continue to face the terrible consequences of such situations, including killings, armed attacks, kidnappings and extortion.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is all too familiar with the realities of the situation; for years now, it has been going into these communities and listening to people who have had to arm themselves with patience as they wait for some kind of response from the government, which has so far failed to materialize or proved insufficient.

In El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and other countries in the region, we encounter many women and men who have lived through the conflicts of the past and tell us of their suffering in the present. People feel that they are hostage to a recycled violence with manifold manifestations that has its roots in the deterioration of the social fabric and widening inequalities. They have to put up with people reminding them on a daily basis who rules their street, an enemy in the shadows who forces them to pay a toll and holds their hopes and their future to ransom.

The other side of the coin is also very familiar to our specialists: the thousands of people deprived of their liberty who we visit in prisons in Central America. Many of them are from the same communities where we carry out projects to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of urban violence. Those who belonged to a gang tell us how the *maras* gave them opportunities that their neighbourhood could not offer them.

People deprived of their liberty cannot just be ignored by the rest of us. Maybe we should see them not as society's rejects but as a reflection of the flaws in our communities, a symbol of our failure? Each of their faces reflects an unfinished or incomplete society, injustices that we have allowed to grow and that have been met with a violence reminiscent of the conflicts we thought we had left behind.

The work of the ICRC is based on the “Nelson Mandela Rules”, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted in 1955 and revised in 2015 by the United Nations.

However they ended up in prison, people deprived of their liberty are entitled to basic legal guarantees. Their life, dignity and rights must be respected, and they must not be subjected to physical or mental torture or treated in a cruel or degrading manner.

The way to do this is to adopt a people-centred prison management approach, ensure that inmates have access to essential health services and can be visited by their families, prevent the abusive use of detention and palliate the lack of prison privileges.

The work of the ICRC in this area is based on the *Nelson Mandela Rules*, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted in 1955 and revised in 2015 by the United Nations. They contain basic recommendations that should guide the implementation of prison policies in any State.

The women and men of Central America believe in peaceful coexistence, solidarity, education and progress. Although we may find it hard to accept, people deprived of their liberty continue to form part of society and play a role in it. The State and the society it represents cannot give up on or disregard the citizens that one day failed them; they must move away from a purely punitive approach which obstructs reintegration, reform the system to humanize prisons and advocate for offenders to reduce the risk of social exclusion upon release and permit their reintegration into the community to lead a productive life.

Learn more about the *Nelson Mandela Rules*.



INTRODUCTION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a humanitarian organization that operates according to the Fundamental Principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence and has the mission of protecting the life and dignity of the victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence and of providing them with assistance. The ICRC endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening international humanitarian law (IHL) and universal humanitarian principles.

The ICRC has Permanent Missions in San Salvador, Tegucigalpa, Guatemala City and Managua, which work in coordination with the regional delegation for Mexico and Central America, located in Mexico City.

The ICRC works closely with the National Red Cross Societies of the Central American countries, and they coordinate their activities. Its main activities in the region are aimed at preventing human suffering caused by violence and focus on responding to the needs of:



The ICRC also works to promote the dissemination and integration of international rules and standards applicable to law enforcement operations to ensure that police forces meet all relevant requirements and increase their awareness of humanitarian issues.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

In northern Central America, specifically in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, organized armed violence remains a problem, and the levels of violence and homicide in these countries are among the highest in the world.

HOMICIDE RATE IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA IN 2018.

COUNTRY	HOMICIDE RATE PER 100,000 INHABITANTS	NUMBER OF HOMICIDES	SOURCE
El Salvador	50.3	3,340	National civil police
Honduras	40.8	3,670	Ministry of Security (preliminary data)
Guatemala	22.4	3,881	National Security Council (national civil police database)

Violence, added to constraints on access to education, health care and other essential public services and the lack of economic prospects, continues to be the main cause of displacement and migration. Violence drives hundreds of thousands of people every year from their homes in search of a better life. It permeates practically every aspect of people's day-to-day lives, and the physical and psychological toll of this is all too evident.

Health-care personnel and teaching staff are well aware of the consequences. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to forced recruitment by armed groups, the progressive deterioration of the social fabric and the lack of education and employment opportunities.

Migrants, including unaccompanied minors, face the same kind of risks as people living in areas affected by violence. During their journey, they often lose contact with their families and have little or no access to basic services. Tighter immigration policies in transit and destination countries force many migrants to take more treacherous routes to avoid detection. Migrants detained by the authorities are sometimes deported to their home country without the chance to apply for international protection or before they receive a decision from the authorities on their application for asylum or protection on humanitarian grounds.

Thousands of people remain without news of family members who are missing as a result of migration, the armed conflicts of the past or current situations of violence. The services in place to assist families in the search for their loved ones and to address their multiple needs are inadequate, mainly due to limited local capacities and the lack of national and supranational mechanisms for information exchange and humanitarian assistance. A major challenge in Central America is interstate coordination, particularly in the search for missing migrants.

With regard to the situation of people deprived of their liberty, prison overcrowding, partly due to delays in the justice system and the lack of alternatives to imprisonment, continues to be a serious concern. This situation exacerbates the generally poor conditions in prisons and means that inmates have limited access to health care.

ICRC PRIORITIES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

The ICRC implements and supports a wide range of programmes and activities in Central America to protect and assist vulnerable people, thereby mitigating the humanitarian consequences of violence, and to promote respect for national and international rules and principles. The ICRC works very closely with the region's National Red Cross Societies, institutions and authorities, local actors, civil society organizations and other humanitarian organizations. Our priorities in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras for 2019 are to:

meet the basic needs of migrants and internally displaced people and take steps to ensure that States fulfil their obligations in this respect more effectively

help young people and the most vulnerable members of communities to deal with the consequences of armed violence, by strengthening their coping mechanisms and resilience and increasing access to health care and education

promote processes aimed at searching for and identifying people who have gone missing as a result of armed conflict, other situations of violence or migration

improve support and assistance aimed at addressing the needs of the families of people missing as a result of armed conflict, other situations of violence or migration, especially the right to know the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones

strengthen regional coordination and information exchange mechanisms for the search for people missing as a result of migration

guarantee that the conditions of detention and treatment of young people and adults deprived of their liberty are humane and conform to international standards

strengthen the involvement of the authorities, the armed forces, the police and the general public to improve support for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and promote greater respect for humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law.



EL SALVADOR

2018 IN NUMBERS

MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE DISPLACED BY VIOLENCE



1,800 free phone calls

were provided for the families of migrants and deportees.

15 displaced families

received support through microeconomic initiatives, which included the provision of productive inputs, job placement and vocational training.

250 people received assistance

in the form of food, shelter and/or transport in cases of displacement caused by violence.

9 assistance points

were set up by the Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC), with the support of the ICRC, for people travelling with the migrant caravans.

64 SRC volunteers

were trained under the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme.

Renovation work was carried out on the building of the missionaries of St Charles (Scalabrinians), the biggest shelter in El Salvador for internally displaced people, migrants and returnees with protection needs.



MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



The recording of 450 missing persons cases in the *ante mortem*–*post mortem* (AM/PM) database of the Institute of Legal Medicine (IML) was facilitated by technical support provided by the ICRC.

60 members of committees

of relatives of missing persons received training to strengthen their technical capacities in search processes and psychosocial support and participated in international events.

5 families of deceased migrants

repatriated from the United States received financial support to collect the remains.

132 forensic specialists from the IML

were trained by consultants in the identification of human remains and in forensic odontology and photography as part of regional exchanges promoted by the ICRC.

124 basic forensic files

were completed by IML personnel, following the recommendations of the ICRC, and linked to the process for the identification of human remains.

7 FORENSIC MEDICINE SERVICES

received support from the ICRC to strengthen their technical capacities.

THE INJURED AND SICK



The IML morgue

in Santa Tecla was renovated to improve the process for the identification of human remains.

1 legal compliance study

was conducted on the national legal framework to determine whether it contains adequate provisions on missing persons and the rights and needs of their families.

Hundreds of families in El Salvador treasure clothes and objects that remind them of their loved ones who went missing after migrating. Discover some of their stories.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY

15,000

people deprived of their liberty held in 10 places of detention benefited from ICRC activities and follow-up in the course of 18 visits.

336 officials

took part in 9 workshops on health care in detention, prison management and international standards on detention (*Nelson Mandela Rules*).

270

detainees were interviewed in private.

30 interviews

were conducted with women in private.

4

juvenile detention facilities and 3 adult detention facilities received support from the ICRC to improve infrastructure.

Urban violence: Find out more about the consequences of urban violence in Latin America and what the ICRC is doing to address the problem.

More than 150 SRC volunteers

took part in training on risk mitigation in service delivery.

Around 90 nurses attended awareness sessions

on the psychological effects they face when treating victims of violence.

More than 20 doctors received advanced

technical training in managing trauma cases.

Medical equipment was donated

to fit out a new patient reception area in a hospital in Zacamil which treats 30,000 people a year.

The laboratory

in the emergency department of the Zacamil hospital was relocated and extended (*Biomedical Project*).

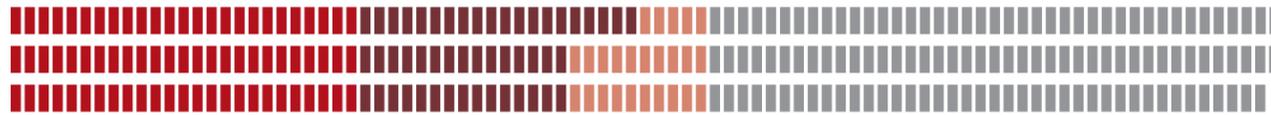
Rudis left El Salvador in search of opportunities. On his way through Mexico, he lost a leg when he fell from *La Bestia*, one of the freight trains that crosses the country. Listen to how the incident changed the way he views life.

ARMED FORCES AND POLICE



272 people

were trained in international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the following:



75 senior police officers

took part in courses on human rights and the management of law enforcement operations;

50 police officers from Ciudad Delgado

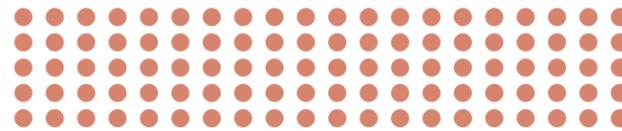
participated in workshops on the rules and standards that govern the use of force in law enforcement;

25 senior officers from the armed forces

received training to update their knowledge of the human rights standards governing the use of force in law enforcement.

100 officials from the institutions

represented on El Salvador's Interinstitutional Committee on International Humanitarian Law (CIDIHES) received training on the rules and standards that govern the use of force, disappearance and international humanitarian law.



SALVADOREAN RED CROSS SOCIETY PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE ICRC



6,200 INHABITANTS,

including students, young people, parents and teachers, in areas seriously affected by armed violence in Ciudad Delgado/ Apopa benefitted from the project *Opportunities and Social Inclusion* (OIS).



2,500 YOUNG PEOPLE,

participated in activities aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, social inclusion, resilience and culture (music, dance, plastic arts, etc.) in these communities.



2,350 STUDENTS

from 5 schools received support from the OIS project.



135 TEACHERS

were involved in programmes for the prevention of violence and peaceful coexistence.



1,200 PEOPLE

received training in community-based first aid.

ACTION TO ASSIST MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE DISPLACED BY VIOLENCE



The ICRC continues to document cases of internally displaced people with protection needs in El Salvador. In 2018, the ICRC:

- intensified efforts to mobilize institutions and coordinate with other civil society actors to provide assistance to families under threat from armed actors
- developed mechanisms to relocate people under threat to another part of the country in an effort to provide lasting solutions
- shared its observations, in bilateral meetings with officials from the Victims Assistance Unit (DAV), on a bill for a special law on assistance for victims consistent with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement adopted by the UN
- sponsored a workshop to analyse Amparo Judgement 411 and its impact on plans to develop pathways for government assistance for victims and the special law on assistance for victims
- began income-generation and job placement activities for people displaced by violence
- strengthened the SRC's national *Restoring Family Links* (RFL) network with training for volunteers and the production of detailed RFL needs assessment reports for seven communities in inland areas of the country.



A boy named Douglas, who lives in Ciudad Delgado, resolved that he would not allow his situation to limit his future and decided to devote his time and energy to starting up a garage.

ACTION TO ASSIST MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



In 2018, the ICRC provided guidance and training for the technical team of the recently created national commission responsible for the search for adults missing as a result of the armed conflict (CONABUSQUEDA).

It also facilitated the first meeting between the Committee of Relatives of Missing Persons (COFADEVI), which works with the families of people who have gone missing as a result of violence in El Salvador, and the Salvadoran authorities responsible for missing persons search processes. This led to the establishment of a dialogue and a commitment from the authorities to improve and step up efforts to deal with individual cases referred to them by the Committee of Relatives.

El ICRC provided technical training and financial support for the activities undertaken by COFADEVI and the Committee of Relatives of Deceased and Missing Migrants ([COFAMIDE](#)).

With a view to identifying possible shortcomings in the national legal framework for the search for missing persons and assistance for their families and proposing and promoting the reforms required to improve the institutional response, the ICRC initiated a study to determine whether the current framework complies with international standards relating to missing persons.



Juan Garcia / ICRC

In addition, it worked to improve assistance for the families of missing persons and the collection of *ante mortem* information, by strengthening the technical capacities of commissions responsible for searching for people who went missing during the armed conflict, the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the service of the Institute of Legal Medicine (IML) responsible for dealing with the families.

The IML uses the AM/PM database, a computer-based tool provided by the ICRC to the Salvadoran authorities which is designed to facilitate the recording and processing of information on missing persons and searches of IML data.

ACTION TO ASSIST PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY



After almost two and a half years of not being able to visit detention facilities for adults in El Salvador, in May 2018, the ICRC regained access to prisons that had been put under special measures that prohibited, among other things, communication with the outside world and all contact with family members.

The ICRC made 18 visits to 10 places of detention, one of which was a women-only prison. Based on these visits, it maintained a confidential bilateral dialogue with the prison authorities to encourage compliance with international standards on conditions of detention. It also donated medical supplies, medicines and construction material to improve the water supply in the prisons.

The ICRC strengthened the institutional capacities of the Directorate General for Prisons by providing support for the prison academy and training for prison officers to improve compliance with international human rights standards. In 2018, efforts focused on enhancing training and coordination with the different institutions of the prison, justice and health-care systems, with a view to improving the treatment of people deprived of their liberty in line with current international standards.

ACTION TO ASSIST THE INJURED AND SICK



The ICRC carried out activities aimed at improving access to assistance by victims of violence in Ciudad Delgado/Apopa and Cojutepeque and the quality of the services provided.

The ICRC, together with the SRC, provided community-based first aid training. It also provided support and follow-up for the formation of neighbourhood health committees in communities where there had been no proper access to health-care services for a number of years due to the high level of violence. The purpose of these committees is to liaise and oversee coordination with medical services and ambulances.

Twenty-three people from the Ministry of Health, the Medical Emergency Care System, the SRC and the Health Solidarity Fund were trained as facilitators in the protection of health-care services.

The ICRC also worked to strengthen technical skills in emergency medicine and improve infrastructure and the supply of medical equipment and materials for first aid units and primary health-care facilities. First [aid workshops](#) were held for SRC volunteers and local police officers.

The ICRC collaborated with the Dr Juan Jose Fernandez national hospital in Zacamil on the implementation of a programme to improve emergency care, involving the strengthening of capacities for the treatment of critical and seriously injured patients and self-management of emotions by health-care personnel.



Jose took part in first aid training and now heads the health committee in his community in Ciudad Delgado. The formation of the committee has facilitated relations with the local health unit. Discover his story.

Training of trainers was provided with courses on psychological trauma, and workshops were held on mental-health carer support and psychosocial care.

Furthermore, the ICRC and the SRC supported the Ministry of Health in implementing rules and procedures for the protection of health services, ensuring respect for the medical mission and disseminating risk mitigation guides for health-care personnel. As part of this work, the ICRC was involved in the first National *Awareness Forum on the Protection of Health Services*, which provided an opportunity for the exchange of experiences from different international contexts.

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE AND DIGNITY THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW



In 2018, the ICRC maintained a closer humanitarian dialogue with the national civil police force (PNC) on the protection people are entitled to. A lessons learned exercise was conducted with 12 high-ranking PNC officers, which provided an opportunity to analyse and reflect on aspects of law enforcement that need to be improved and strengthened.

With a view to encouraging reflection on the need to include a human rights perspective in police leadership and management, three courses were given on this subject. In Ciudad Delgado, two workshops were organized to raise awareness about the rules and standards that govern the use of force in law enforcement.

The ICRC continued to support the implementation of activities for the Salvadoran armed forces aimed at teaching and promoting the rules of human rights law that govern the use of force in law enforcement, given the supporting role these forces have in law enforcement. To this end, it held a workshop on the subject for high-ranking military officers.

The ICRC also resumed the provision of technical assistance to El Salvador's Interinstitutional Committee on International Humanitarian Law (CIDIHES). It arranged visits to El Salvador by specialists in the use of force, disappearances and the challenges that new technologies pose for international humanitarian law. It also supported a binational meeting on the marking of cultural property between the CIDIHES and the Guatemalan Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (COGUADIH).

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE RED CROSS CONSORTIUM



The ICRC's work in coordination with the SRC focuses on two areas of action: Ciudad Delgado/Apopa, on the outskirts of San Salvador, and Cojutepeque in the department of Cuscatlan. The two organizations pursue the same goal, which is to mitigate the humanitarian consequences of violence in these areas.

In Ciudad Delgado/Apopa, the ICRC supports the project *Opportunities and Social Inclusion* (OIS). It was launched in 2011 and is led by the SRC, which implements the activities autonomously. The project has financing pledged up to March 2021 with funds from the Italian Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC.

The strength of the OIS project is that it approaches the task of rebuilding the social fabric from various angles: psychosocial support; art and culture activities; the renovation or construction of social/collective infrastructure; support and training for preventive health care; community organization through youth

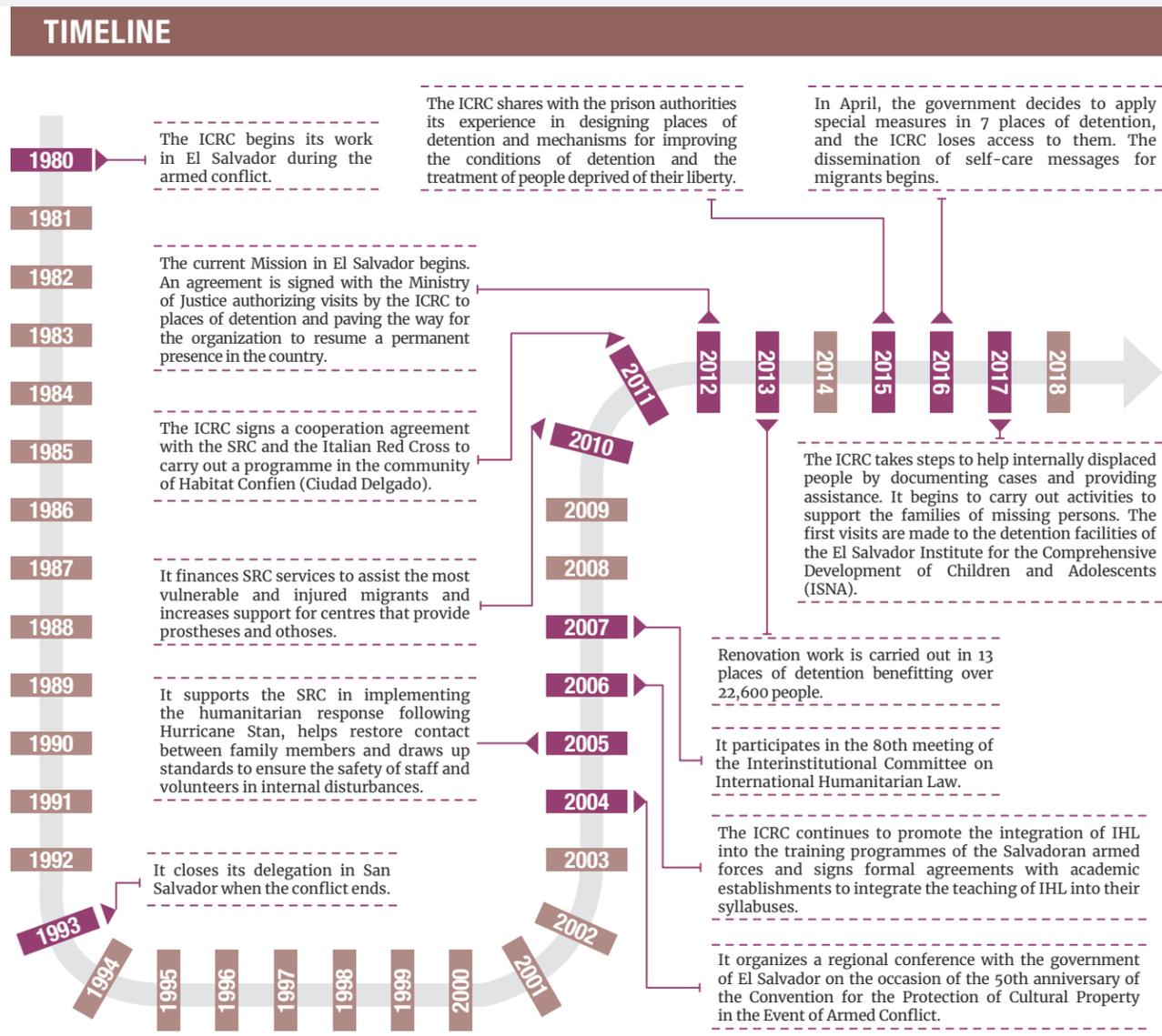
leadership; and youth entrepreneurship and the promotion of employment opportunities. These activities aim to strengthen the capacities and resilience of communities, enabling their members to become agents of their own development.

Also in the Ciudad Delgado/Apopa area, the ICRC and the SRC carried out activities in line with the OIS approach, with a view to reinforcing the achievements of the project. Initially, they focused efforts on health-care needs and were successful in reopening State health facilities that had been closed for years. In the area of employment, the ICRC, in collaboration with a private-sector IT company and the SRC, developed *Fair Programming*, a completely new approach to vocational training in computer programming that enabled young people from violence-affected areas to find steady employment.

In the Cojutepeque area, the ICRC complemented the work of the SRC through the National Society's project *Improving Access to Health Services*, funded by the Norwegian Red Cross. It carried out two projects in the communities of El Huerto and Ojo de Agua. In El Huerto, a first aid team was formed with a view to creating an official committee. In association with the Social Pastoral Service, 18 young victims of violence were trained in starting up and managing small businesses, eight of whom are now earning a living in an area with high unemployment.



Jeffrey is one of the young people trained under the *Fair Programming* initiative. Discover his story.



GUATEMALA

2018 IN NUMBERS

MIGRANTS

- 30,000 free phone calls** were provided at 10 assistance points, enabling migrants to contact their families and thereby helping to prevent disappearances.
- Support for pre-hospital care** was provided by the GRC during the large-scale movements of migrants.
- 70 migrants** who had suffered amputations received comprehensive assistance under rehabilitation programmes.
- 6 shelters for migrants** received medical supplies, and one had infrastructure improvements carried out.
- 4 family reunifications** were arranged, reuniting family members separated as a result of migration.
- Around 4,800 of these calls** were provided to people travelling with the migrant caravans between October and December.
- 9,000 medical** or health advice consultations were provided by the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) with support from the ICRC.
- 1,200 of these medical consultations** were provided by four doctors engaged by the ICRC during the large-scale movements of migrants between October and December.

MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



More than 550 bodies



of victims of the internal armed conflict were given a proper burial with support from the ICRC.

470 families received assistance



with legal administrative procedures to claim compensation from the State.

26 offices



of the National Institute of Forensic Science (INACIF) received training in identification processes.

2,000 missing persons cases



were included in the databases.

128 tombs were constructed



for the burial of unidentified migrants and victims of the armed conflict with a dignified and culturally sensitive approach.

13 public events



were held in memory of the missing.

37 children



who had disappeared during the conflict were reunited with their families, with the support of the ICRC.

The cases of 1,500 children



who disappeared during the conflict were documented and searches conducted with the collaboration of the ICRC.

90 children and adolescents



whose relatives went missing after migrating received scholarships to continue their studies.

10 workshops and 2 seminars



were held to improve the use of procedures and good practices by forensic institutions and those responsible for processing information for identification purposes.

1 legal compliance study



was conducted on the national legal framework to determine whether it contains adequate provisions on missing persons and the rights and needs of their families.

EDUCATION IN COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

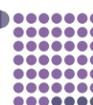


960 students



took part in socio-educational and recreational activities relating to conflict resolution and resilience building.

73 students,
17 student leaders,
23 teachers/administrative staff and
11 parents



were trained in how to formulate a school risk management plan with the implementation of drills in 4 selected schools.

180 student leaders



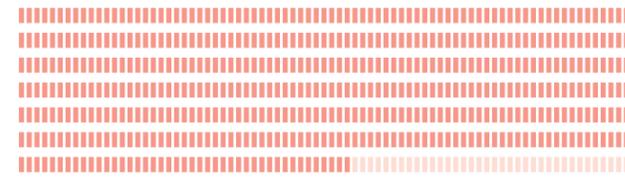
took part in workshops on resilience building, conflict management and gender equality.

48 parents



participated in activities aimed at cohering the school community.

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE AND THE INJURED AND SICK



523 people were trained

by the ICRC in psychological and psychosocial care.

134 relatives of missing migrants

received mental health support during the search process and at other relevant times.



11 group therapy sessions

were held for 16 people with physical disabilities after being injured in armed attacks, accompanied by their families.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY



8

visits to 4 places of detention with a capacity to accommodate 1,200 children and adolescents.

More than 300 children and adolescents

received visits from ICRC personnel.



50

relatives of young detainees received financial aid to cover travel costs to visit them.

1 workshop on the health

of young detainees was held for senior officials from the Department of Social Welfare.



ARMED FORCES AND POLICE



135 members of the national civil police force and 56 members of the armed forces

of Guatemala received training on the rules and standards governing the use of force in law enforcement and on IHL and other standards and principles.

50 government officials

took part in a course for the Guatemalan Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (COGUADIH).

30 judicial officers

received training in IHL at the Judicial College.

221 military officers from the region

participating in peacekeeping operations attended courses on IHL and human rights promoted by the Guatemalan army at the CREOMPAZ training facility.

GUATEMALAN RED CROSS PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE ICRC



2,340 psychological consultations



and social support or medical care for 276 victims of armed and sexual violence were provided in collaboration with the GRC.

4 psychologists who gave 325 psychological and psychosocial consultations



received technical and financial support.

120 young people



received psychological or psychosocial support from the GRC.

SUPPORT IN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS: ERUPTION OF THE FUEGO VOLCANO (JUNE 2018)



7 FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGISTS, 3 FORENSIC ODONTOLOGISTS AND 5 ANALYSTS/DATA ENTRY OPERATORS

provided technical support to assist families and deal with cases at the temporary morgue in Hunapu.



200 BODY BAGS,

personal protective equipment and reagents were donated to the authorities.



250 CASES

were dealt with by the interdisciplinary forensic team supported by the ICRC.



120 IDENTIFICATIONS

were made with the support of the INACIF.



25 RFL CASES WERE SUCCESSFULLY

resolved, enabling victims to restore contact with their families.

ACTION TO ASSIST MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE DISPLACED BY VIOLENCE



In Guatemala, the ICRC endeavours to protect and assist vulnerable migrants along migration routes and during the repatriation process. Given that Guatemala is a country of transit, return and, in some cases, refuge, the ICRC provides practical self-care information for migrants in an effort to reduce the risks they face on their journey.

It also provides assistance on an ad hoc basis to vulnerable, deported and repatriated migrants to help them get any medical attention they need and reunite with their families. Orthopaedic services are also provided to migrants who are left with physical disabilities or injuries as a result of armed violence.

ACTION TO ASSIST MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



In Guatemala, around 45,000 people disappeared during the armed conflict (1960–1996). The families of 40,000 of them are still waiting for answers as to the whereabouts of their loved ones. Since the signing of the peace agreement, thousands of Guatemalans have continued to go missing as a result of violence or migration. People disappear every day on the migration routes leading to the north of the continent.

The ICRC supports and promotes efforts to search for missing persons, reunite families, ensure the dignified burial of exhumed remains, support the families of the missing and promote social recognition of their needs.



Thirty-two of Lucia's relatives disappeared in Guatemala.

The ICRC supported institutions that assist families waiting to be informed of the whereabouts of their loved ones and seek social recognition for their suffering. It also collaborated in the search for missing persons by recording and compiling *ante mortem* (AM) and *post mortem* (PM) data and documenting cases with information from strategic files.

In coordination with the country's main community radio network, a nationwide communication plan was implemented to keep families informed about events promoting the search for missing persons and recognition of this humanitarian issue and to provide updates on contacts with relevant institutions. The radio broadcasts went out daily in different Mayan languages.

The ICRC collaborated in the formulation of national guidelines on forensic identification and continued promoting the formation of a national search commission based on existing mechanisms. It was also involved in important initiatives to develop standards for missing persons searches. It focused its work with the authorities on the implementation of the law on genetic databanks and new laws on migration and missing women, which entailed working with the Public Ministry (public prosecution service), the INACIF and the Ministry of the Interior.

PROMOTING HUMANITARIAN SPACES FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES IN AREAS AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE



There are areas in Guatemala where people of all ages live with armed violence on a daily basis. This has both physical and psychological effects and prevents them from living a decent life.

Through its programme *Humanitarian Schools*, the ICRC carries out activities in Villa Nueva with teachers, parents and students. The aim is for schools to be recognized as safe places where human life and dignity are respected.

The programme promotes schools as safe community spaces in which the values that are fostered contribute to strengthening peaceful coexistence and social cohesion in the community.

It involves the implementation of socio-educational activities and the creation of spaces for dialogue in four schools in Villa Nueva, with the aim of promoting access to education and mitigating the consequences of violence.



Wagner, Andy and Velvet were finding it hard to continue their studies when their parents went missing after migrating. Discover their story.

ACTION TO ASSIST THE INJURED AND SICK



In Guatemala, the ICRC supports two physical rehabilitation centres that provide services for people with disabilities, including migrants, deportees, returnees and victims of violence.

In addition, the ICRC informs health-care workers about their rights and obligations and provides specialized advice to hospitals on medical attention for adult detainees.

ACTION TO ASSIST PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY



In 2018, the ICRC carried out visits to places of detention for children and adolescents to monitor their treatment and conditions in the facilities. In the course of these visits, the ICRC spoke with the young

detainees in private or in groups and held confidential talks with the authorities to share its recommendations on the social reintegration of adolescents upon release and other matters relating to detention.

The ICRC supported efforts to develop health-care and referral pathways and procedures for detainees requiring medical attention, working with various institutions responsible for providing these services to the prison population.

In collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the GRC, the ICRC facilitated the establishment of an intersectoral taskforce dedicated to improving the protection of medical personnel when providing health services to people deprived of their liberty.

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE AND DIGNITY THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW



The ICRC provided advice to the Guatemalan Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (COGUADIH) and organized a workshop on IHL for civil servants and government officials.

Effective implementation of IHL and reflection on the rules applicable in armed conflicts and their relevance were promoted among university lecturers and students and members of Congress by the ICRC in a number of academic conferences and forums.

The ICRC strengthened the dialogue with the national civil police force through activities that involved training on human rights standards applicable in law enforcement, with an emphasis on children, adolescents and migrants. It also promoted international exchanges of best practices in law enforcement and worked in coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) to update domestic rules governing the use of force by law enforcement agencies.

The ICRC supported training in IHL and human rights promoted by the Guatemalan army, in coordination with the Presidential Commission on Human Rights (COPREDEH) and as part of regional courses for troops involved in peacekeeping operations at the regional training centre for peacekeeping operations (CREOMPAZ).

GUATEMALAN RED CROSS PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE ICRC



GRC Comprehensive Assistance Centre (CAI)

The ICRC in Guatemala has a comprehensive strategy for its response to the humanitarian consequences of armed violence. Activities centre on the municipality of Villa Nueva, where there is a Comprehensive Assistance Centre for victims of armed violence run by the GRC.

The centre, which began operating in 2016, is run by the GRC with funding from the Norwegian Red Cross and financial and technical support from the ICRC. It assists victims of armed and sexual violence, with a strong emphasis on respect for the privacy of those who attend the centre.

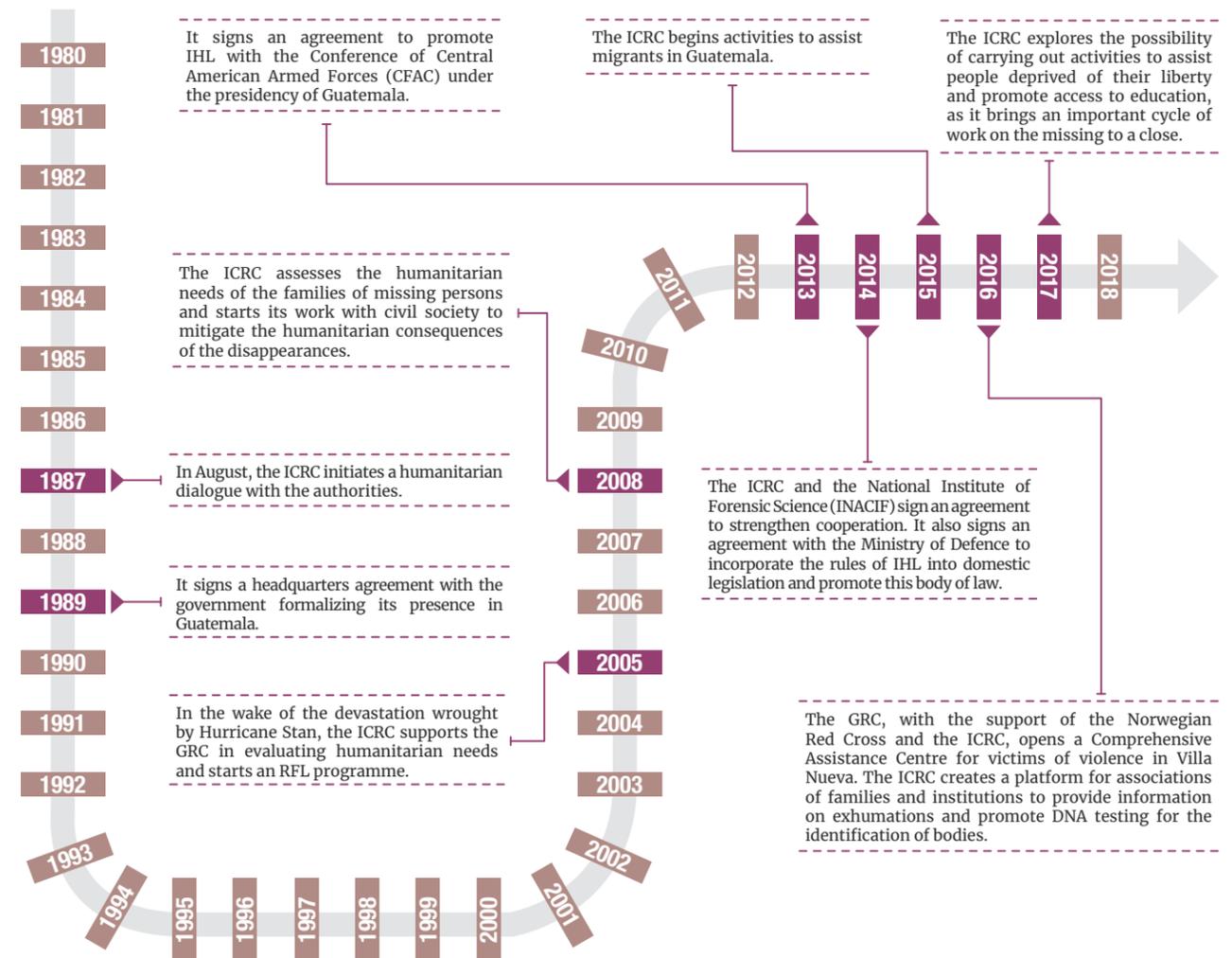
The centre works in coordination with other institutions in Villa Nueva and neighbouring areas, providing psychological care for victims of armed and sexual violence. The centre refers them to other institutions for medical attention or physical rehabilitation, as appropriate. The project also has a vocational training component that aims to help victims earn a living, and it promotes social inclusion through adapted sports and art. The therapeutic process seeks to help victims individually so that they recover from the traumatic experience they have suffered and also aims to build resilience at the community level.

The exclusively humanitarian and impartial nature of the centre means that it is accessible to the most vulnerable people who have no support networks and to people who, for fear of reprisals, would be reluctant to go to a government institution.

Safer Access work

The ICRC supports the GRC in efforts to strengthen its areas of action and procedures, with a view to ensuring safer access to problem areas. This involves support for volunteers and training of trainers in the areas of psychosocial care, security, communication, etc.

TIMELINE



HONDURAS

2018 IN NUMBERS

MIGRANTS AND DISPLACED PEOPLE



34,600 migrants and deportees received humanitarian aid from the ICRC and the Honduran Red Cross (HRC).

29,000 free phone calls were provided for the families of migrants and deportees at 4 assistance points run by the HRC in Omoa, La Lima, Belen and Choluteca.

2,600 migrants received assistance from the HRC on health matters with support from the ICRC.

300 people displaced by violence received humanitarian assistance.

124 returning migrants received treatment under the rehabilitation programme for returnees with physical disabilities, which included the provision of 44 prostheses and 2 orthoses.

131 returning migrants with disabilities received mental health care.

A total of 575 migrants, including the above, have received mental health care at Teleton centres in San Pedro Sula and at the Vida Nueva Foundation in Choluteca since 2014.

76 displaced people received mental health care and psychosocial support provided by 26 psychologists and 12 psychosocial workers trained to attend to victims of violence.

Large-scale movements of migrants:

3,600 migrants in vulnerable situations received assistance.

Technical and financial support was provided to the HRC.

MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



700 basic forensic records were incorporated with guidance from the ICRC.

550 relatives of missing migrants received psychosocial and mental health support at difficult moments, specifically the collection of repatriated remains, notifications and the taking of DNA samples.

78 forensic specialists received training in their field.

62 mental health and psychosocial support specialists received training in their field.

18 forensic specialists received specific training in mental health and psychosocial support.

A room to receive families in a dignified setting was constructed at the morgue in San Pedro Sula.

THE INJURED AND SICK



4 civil society organizations



received training provided by the ICRC: Amor y Fe, La Guadalupe, COFAMIPRO and COFAMICENH.

1 legal compliance study



was conducted on the national legal framework to determine whether it contains adequate provisions on missing persons and the rights and needs of their families.

In Central Park in La Paz, Honduras, 15 relatives of missing migrants painted a mural symbolizing the strength they have gained over the cycle of support.



455 people received specialized training

in assisting people with gunshot wounds and people injured by explosives.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY



23

visits were made to 10 places of detention accommodating over 21,100 men, women and children.

430 minors were visited

in 5 places of detention, which included sessions featuring game-based methodologies and a participatory assessment to define a future work plan.

1,500

people deprived of their liberty, including women and children, benefitted from improved conditions thanks to infrastructure and risk management projects at facilities in Gracias and the national women's prison (PNFAS).

Training on the Bangkok Rules



was provided to personnel working with almost 800 women detainees at the PNFAS.



A visit to this prison was organized for Spanish members of parliament.

The Digital Prison Records System (SIDIEXP) was launched, a first step towards establishing a national prison register.



The HRC received support

in the area of psychological and psychosocial care and carried out 223 sessions.

ARMED FORCES AND POLICE



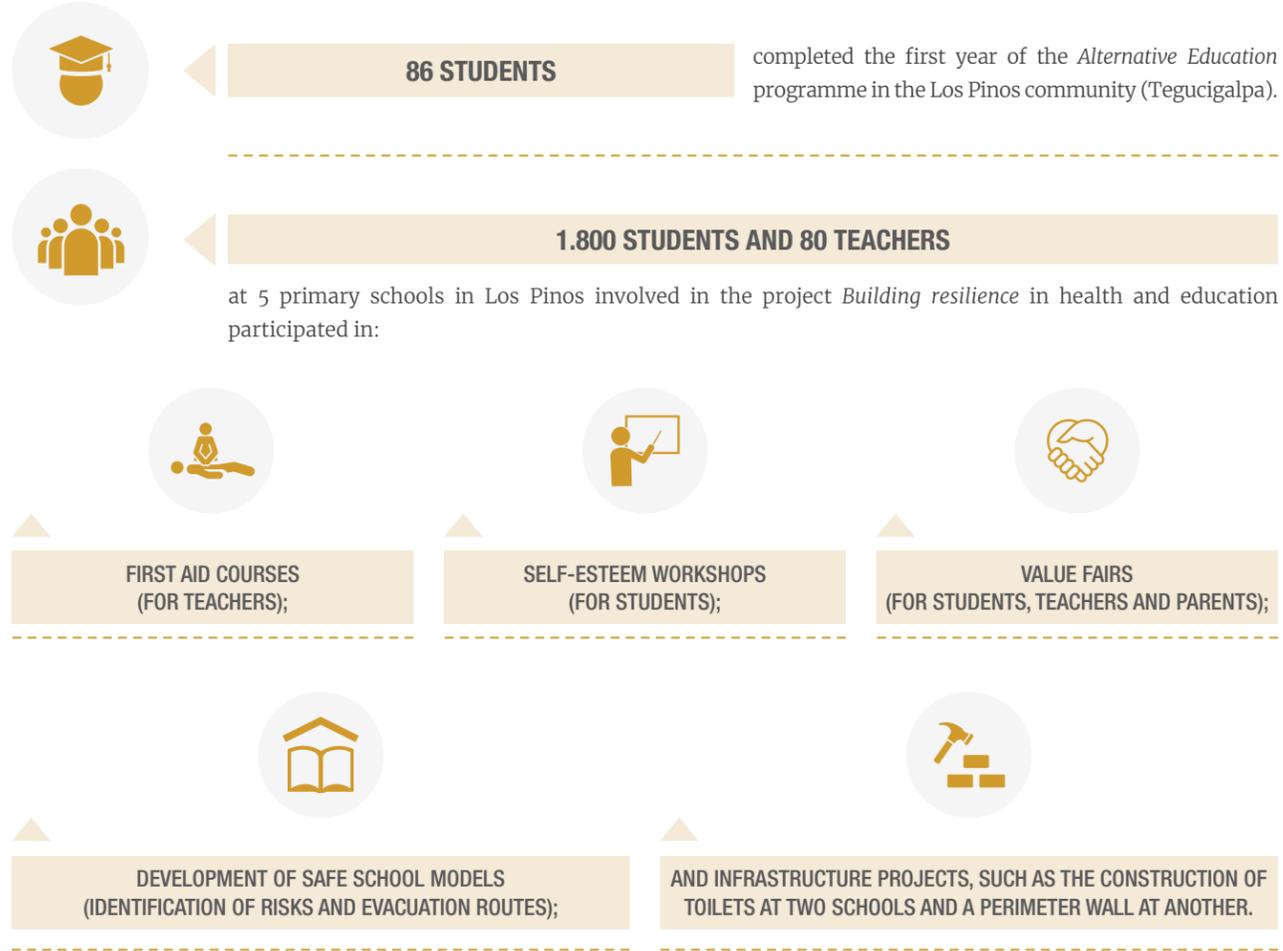
More than 200 members of the armed forces, police officers and human rights defenders

received training in international rules and standards governing the use of force in law enforcement, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Support was provided for the training of 4,500

military police officers by military instructors on the laws and standards governing the use of force in law enforcement, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

JOINT PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE HRC AND THE NORWEGIAN RED CROSS



ACTION TO ASSIST MIGRANTS AND PEOPLE DISPLACED BY VIOLENCE



The ICRC works with the HRC and the local authorities to promote the rights of migrants, whether they are in transit or have returned or been deported, and to ensure that their basic needs are met. This response includes a programme that provides migrants and violence-affected people who have disabilities with physical rehabilitation and prostheses, orthoses, crutches and wheelchairs.

The ICRC's mental health and psychosocial support department supported HRC staff and volunteers working at the Assistance Centre for Returning Migrants (CAMR) in Omoa through a programme that seeks to offer mechanisms for coping with stress, peer-to-peer care and assistance to establish standards and work schedules to prevent burnout among the volunteers delivering such services. Returning migrants with physical disabilities were also attended by 13 psychologists and 11 psychosocial workers in 7 rehabilitation centres.

The ICRC provided legal and technical guidance to the Interinstitutional Commission for the Protection of People Displaced by Violence (CIPPDV) to revise and improve the draft bill on the protection of internally



Noel and Yeyson, who are from Honduras, suffered accidents on the migration route. Listen to their account of their rehabilitation process.

displaced people. In these coordination efforts, the ICRC focused on strengthening the technical capacity of the authorities to create legal protection mechanisms and frameworks to effectively meet the humanitarian aid needs created by internal displacement due to violence in Honduras.

The ICRC identifies returning migrants with protection needs and directly provides them with humanitarian assistance. In collaboration with the HRC, it supports clinics at repatriation centres to ensure that the specific health needs of returning migrants are addressed.

Working closely with the HRC, the Spanish Red Cross and the ICRC developed an emergency assistance pathway to meet the immediate protection and aid needs of displaced people. This included support for income-generating activities as a way of helping beneficiaries rebuild their lives and earn a decent living.

Lastly, the ICRC provided humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Nicaraguans fleeing from their country, giving priority to those in transit. Those wishing to apply for asylum were referred to UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

ACTION TO ASSIST MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES



The ICRC promoted and supported the creation of a Missing Migrants Search Taskforce in 2015, bringing together government institutions, Mexican consular and migration authorities and civil society organizations, including committees of relatives of missing migrants.

The purpose of the taskforce is to jointly develop national and regional procedures for the search for missing migrants who are still alive and for the forensic identification of remains and to establish family assistance and support pathways. As part of this work, a standard form was developed for collecting ante mortem information in interviews with family members.

The ICRC was also involved in designing a computer file for recording and improving the management of ante mortem information on missing migrants. It was given to four committees of relatives, which received a computer each and basic training in information management.

Alongside these efforts, the ICRC made recommendations to the Forensic Medicine Directorate and the Foreign Ministry's Department for the Protection of Migrants on forensic matters, specifically on the



Hector was 19 when he left El Progreso. Since he disappeared, his family has never stopped searching for him.



collection of ante mortem data and the technical and scientific processes associated with the forensic identification of deceased migrants. In this regard, the ICRC held workshops on forensic work in the search for missing persons, the identification of remains and the notification of the families of the deceased.

ACTION TO ASSIST PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY



In 2018, the agreement between the ICRC and the government of Honduras authorizing the organization to visit places of detention was updated, with the addition of the Supreme Court of Justice as a signatory. Two working groups examined issues relating to judicial guarantees and health in prisons.

The ICRC focused particularly on maximum security prisons, the country's only women's prison and juvenile detention centres. However, it also provided support aimed at the prison population as a whole in the areas of prison management, judicial guarantees and health.

Under the project *Digital Prison Records System (SIDIEXP)*, the ICRC supported the prison authorities in establishing a national prison register to ensure the proper administration of prison records and to facilitate the performance of certain services, including the classification of prisoners, health care and prison privileges.

The ICRC strengthened the interdisciplinary technical councils at different places of detention with training on the laws and regulations applicable to people deprived of their liberty and the development of the councils' standard operating procedures. These procedures, along with those of the SIDIEXP, will help ensure that there is a progressive treatment system for prisoners and better classification.

Coordination between the National Penitentiary Institute (INP), the Ministry of Health (SESAL) and the ICRC resulted in the strengthening of the health system in places of detention in Honduras, with a view to improving access to health care and the quality of health services for people deprived of their liberty.

ACTION TO ASSIST THE INJURED AND SICK



The ICRC provides comprehensive support to the Emergency Department of the Tegucigalpa University Hospital, which treats over half of the country's gunshot victims. This support includes the provision of equipment, supplies, personnel training and specialized guidance on how to improve emergency room protocols and academic content.

Work was carried out to strengthen the system of community clinics through donations and updates, with a view to easing congestion in the University Hospital's emergency department. Support was also provided for the training of HRC medical emergency technicians in order to strengthen the ambulance system and pre-hospital management.

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE AND DIGNITY THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW



The ICRC carried out training activities on the rules and standards governing the use of force in law enforcement, human rights and international humanitarian law for members of the armed forces and police and supported training in these areas for large numbers of military police officers.

It provided guidance to civil servants on incorporating IHL into local legislation and other instruments in areas such as regulation of the use of force and the response to the needs of internally displaced people and missing persons and their families. In this regard, it widely promoted a draft bill governing the use of force by law enforcement agencies, which had been developed with its support.

JOINT PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY THE HONDURAN RED CROSS AND THE NORWEGIAN RED CROSS



Building resilience in health and education in the Los Pinos community (Tegucigalpa)

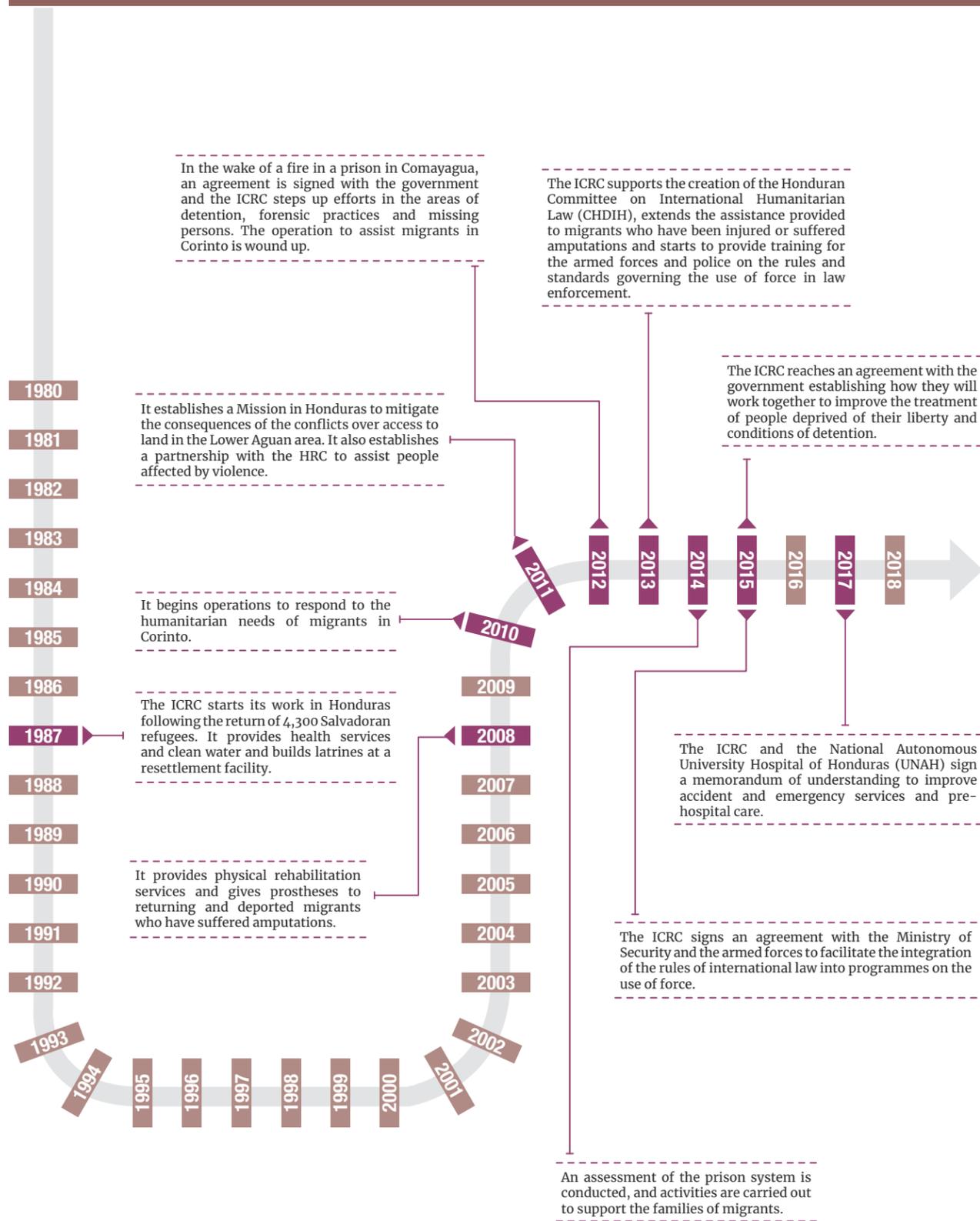
In March 2018, a project was launched in the Los Pinos community in Tegucigalpa based on an agreement signed by the HRC, the Norwegian Red Cross and the ICRC, which will run to the end of 2020. The ICRC provides technical and financial support for the project and works with the HRC team in the areas of operational security and communication.

The project is based on three main areas of work: access to alternative education for those who have fallen behind at school; resilience building for health service providers in Los Pinos; and community resilience building with the school community and local leaders.

The inhabitants of Los Pinos have also benefited from ICRC services not included in the project, such as assistance pathways for internally displaced people, visits to places of detention and medical and triage training at the health centre.



TIMELINE



NICARAGUA

In December 2018, the ICRC was authorized by the Nicaraguan government to visit people deprived of their liberty, in particular, those detained in connection with the violent protests that swept the country in April 2018. The first visits took place in January 2019, when the ICRC established a Permanent Mission in Managua.

In view of these events, the ICRC also provided support to the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) to ensure that it was able to continue delivering its services safely, particularly the ambulance service. As a result of the fact that the National Society's humanitarian work is guided by the Fundamental Principles of neutrality and impartiality, it was the only humanitarian actor accepted on the streets during the internal disturbances, and this boosted the positive perception of the National Society.

NRC volunteers received support to implement the *Safer Access Framework* (SAF), resulting in the strengthening of operational risk analysis and assessment, institutional visibility and identification, psychosocial support, stress management and operational communications. The National Society has 23 facilitators responsible for implementing this framework nationwide.

For the fourth year running, the ICRC held a workshop on the rules governing military operations at which 20 high-ranking officers from member countries of the *Conference of Central American Armed Forces* (CFAC) discussed the incorporation of the rules of international humanitarian law into the doctrine, instruction, training and disciplinary system of the armed forces.



Read the account of the regional operational communications officer on his experience with NRC volunteers.



Nicaraguan Red Cross / ICRC

■ COSTA RICA

The ICRC works closely with the Costa Rican government, particularly with its National Committee for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law.

The ICRC participated in the *Specialized course on international humanitarian law and its relevance today*, aimed at civil servants, government officials and academics. It also advised the IHL Committee on matters such as the marking of cultural property for its protection in the event of armed conflict, according to the 1954 Hague Convention, and the criminalization and punishment of war crimes.

In Costa Rica, the ICRC also maintains relations with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, which is based in San Jose. As a result of collaboration between the two institutions, an issue of the court's case law bulletin *The book of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights*, published in 2018, addressed the question of the interaction between international humanitarian law and human rights in the light of judgements delivered by the Court. The publication is a useful resource for international law experts and academics.



*The book of the
Inter-American
Court of Human
Rights.*



ICRC

 facebook.com/CICRDRMX
 twitter.com/CICR_DRMX
 instagram.com/cicr_americas

**ICRC Regional Delegation for Mexico
and Central America**
Presidente Masaryk 29
Chapultepec Morales
11570, Mexico City
(+52) 55 2581 2110
www.icrc.org
mex_mexico@icrc.org
© ICRC