



ICRC deputy head of delegation Christoph Sutter is interviewed by local media at the launch of the Call for Action working group on the criminal justice process, in Tacloban City early this year. The Call for Action process was launched in 2007 by the ICRC in coordination with authorities to respond to humanitarian issues in Philippine jails.

Ma. Socorro Pancipant/ICRC

NEWSLETTER

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RED CROSS AWARD HIGHLIGHTS HUMANITARIAN ISSUES IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Editorial by Anastasia Isyuk, Communication coordinator

The winners of the first Red Cross Award for Humanitarian Reporting were announced in Manila shortly before 8 May – the Red Cross day (see details on page 2). The judging committee had a difficult task at hand: to select reports which were not only timely, relevant and well-written, but also showed the effects of conflicts and not a single event; were backed by several sources; and compatible with the principles of conflict-sensitive reporting. These principles entail that the report would not label or stereotype people or groups; nor take advantage of the victims' plight, but rather encourage the readers to move into action.

Media safety and the plight of internally displaced people, peace-building initiatives and community projects, problems of children affected by conflicts and indiscriminate use of weapons are some of the issues highlighted by the contestants.

Journalists, as well as humanitarian organizations, have one thing in common: when everybody is fleeing the conflict, we

are coming in. We also have a common responsibility to ensure that those who are not fighting, will be spared, and have a chance to lead a normal life. The Red Cross Award is given to journalists who report on people often forgotten or dismissed as "collateral damage" of war.

Increasingly over the past decades, we have seen civilians targeted in armed conflicts. This also includes journalists and humanitarian workers. At the ICRC, we strongly believe that the best way to achieve stronger protection for civilians in armed conflicts is to respect international humanitarian law (IHL). This is only possible through the concerted effort of decision-makers, weapon bearers and civil society.

Recent studies by the ICRC have shown that IHL will only be respected if the following conditions are met: fighters get clear orders to do so; the society they live in supports such rules; and those who break these rules are punished.

The media's voice should be heard in favor of proper and responsible behavior in wars. Media, therefore, have a responsibility to influence public opinion, weapon bearers and governments and to avoid any encouragement to violate the law.

The first Red Cross media contest brought together many journalists in the Philippines who are interested in humanitarian analysis of conflicts, which is as necessary as political, economic, military and historical analyses that journalists so frequently use. We hope that these numbers will continue to grow and that the second award will receive even more entries and support across the Philippines.

EXCERPTS FROM WINNING ENTRIES

"New legs, new life"
Stella A. Estremera
Sun.Star Davao

"Up with the good, down with the bad. This could have been a slogan repeated by some street protester or an inspirational speaker, but it isn't. It was a phrase repeated over and over by physical therapist Chona D. Serra, rehabilitation coordinator of the Davao Jubilee Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled Inc. The center has given new legs to amputees through the years many of whom were victims of conflict from all sides -- rebels, military, and civilians.

"The armed conflict in Kabacan, North Cotabato"
Malu C. Manar
DXND-AM radio station, North Cotabato

"The land of Mindanao is 'full of promises' and has a lot to offer. But it also brings pain, especially to those affected by conflict. (...) They fear they might be hit by stray bullets or be driven away from their lands, which they have been tilling for so long a time (...) if both parties have opened their doors, there is no doubt the conflict would be resolved."



ICRC

AND THE RED CROSS AWARD GOES TO...

Some 23 journalists made it to the final cut of the Red Cross Award for Humanitarian Reporting 2011, the first media competition held by the ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), in partnership with the International News Safety Institute, Peace and Conflict Journalism Network, Philippine Association of Communication Educators, and Rotary Club of Manila.

The Red Cross Award received around 60 entries mostly from National Capital Region and Mindanao, since its launch on 12 August 2010, IHL Day. An overwhelming number came from mainstream and community journalists from the print and online media.

The entries were screened on focus and date of coverage, after which 15 judges from partner-organizations and guest judges critiqued the finalists based on: evidence of research (30 percent); sourcing (20 percent); coherence/ organization (20 percent); style and presentation (15 percent); and conflict-sensitive reporting (15 percent).

But as they say—many are called but only few are chosen. The winners and finalists of the Red Cross Award are:

TOP THREE WINNERS FOR PRINT

Friston Lim, correspondent of the Philippine Daily Inquirer-Mindanao bureau, for his in-depth story “Women grieve over land mine deaths” published on 27 February 2011

Stella Estremera, editor in chief of Sun.Star Davao, for “New legs, new life,” her feature on the work of Davao Jubilee Foundation and its amputee-beneficiaries

Fernando del Mundo, desk editor and chief of the investigative team of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, for his three-part series “New Centurions” on the development efforts in Central Mindanao

TOP THREE WINNERS FOR ONLINE

Marya Salamat of Bulatlat.com for her story “Child rights advocates bewail distortion of child protection principles for counter-insurgency” published on 20 November 2010

Ina Alleco Silverio of Bulatlat.com for her story “Child soldiers or victims?” published on 6 February 2011

Andreo Calonzo of Gmanews.tv for the story “A year after Ampatuan massacre, local journalists struggle to stay safe” published on 19 November 2010.

TOP THREE WINNERS FOR TV/RADIO

Ed Lingao, multimedia director of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, for his documentary “Maguindanao, isang taon” on the first anniversary of the Maguindanao massacre aired on 20 December 2010

Malu Manar, program director of DXND-NDBC in Kidapawan, North Cotabato, for her special report on the clash between MILF and MNLF in “The armed conflict in Kabacan, North Cotabato,” aired on 5 February 2011

Marga Ortigas, Al Jazeera correspondent, for her exclusive story on breakaway MILF leader Umbra Kato in “Southern Philippines conflict: Splinter group seen as threat to peace,” aired on 16 February 2011

SUPPORTING FARMERS' LIVELIHOOD

In Central Mindanao, the ICRC assists the most vulnerable families who were affected by conflict to restore their livelihood. In 2011, 2,827 families received rice or vegetable seeds and tools, while 70 farmers attended specialized agricultural trainings. Progressively, the ICRC is focusing on community-based income generating projects. For example, 74 tiller machines (*kuliglig*) were provided to farmers' association for community use, partially in cooperation with ARMM DSWD and DA. ICRC field officer Princess Kedtag reports from the field.



The distribution of relief goods for vulnerable families fell on a sizzling-hot day. Many wore hats while some covered their faces with cloth or wore white long-sleeved shirts. Despite the heat, the items—which included shovel, pickaxe, vegetable seed, laundry soap, and food products—were meticulously arranged at the cordoned area. After two hours of distribution, we rushed under a shade to protect ourselves from the unbearable heat.



The torque and horsepower of jeepneys will help reach places with bad road conditions especially during the rainy season. This vehicle can load huge materials or accommodate many passengers. The community hired it to bring back home the rice seeds given by ICRC.



It would take long years of hard work, savings and patience for vulnerable farmers before obtaining a very useful farming machinery - *kuliglig*. With this ICRC project, their long-time dream has come true. A total of 74 farmers' associations received hand tractors to help them attain more productivity in farming and of course, return to normal life after the conflict in 2008. Farmers who received the machine said it was by far the best assistance the ICRC could give.

WASTE NO MORE: INTRODUCING RENEWABLE ENERGY IN PHILIPPINE JAILS

Even detention facilities are exploring renewable energy to heat water or cook food for inmates. Our in-house reporter Allison Lopez shows how biogas and solar power in Cagayan de Oro and Bukidnon jails are slashing food costs and helping to preserve the environment.

Visitors to Cagayan de Oro City Jail will be tempted by the scent of freshly baked bread wafting from its small bakery. The bakers – who are detainees themselves – prepare an assortment of *monay* (special Philippine bread), and bread with cheese, pineapple, or peanut butter fillings on metal trays, before heating them in the oven.

“Sa biogas, nakakatipid kami at environment friendly. Maganda rin yung luto ng tinapay sa biogas kasi tuloy-tuloy naman yung apoy (Biogas saves money and it’s environment friendly. The bread also comes out well because the fire is consistent),” said 28-year-old inmate-baker Nick as he opens two valves. One is connected to an LPG tank, but the other leads to a biogas tank – quite uncommon in jails, even outside the Philippines.

Using biogas or methane to cook food began in Cagayan de Oro (CDO) jail in 2009, just as the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) ordered the elimination of firewood in its detention facilities. CDO was one of five jails chosen by the ICRC to implement the biogas project, and it remains a prime example of an innovative programme for reducing both financial and environmental costs.

In the kitchen at CDO, for example, cooks use biogas for fish and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for the huge pots of rice needed to feed more than 1,000 inmates.

Better sanitation

LPG is expensive, whereas biogas is free. “Biogas has a natural source of energy, which in this case is human waste. From the toilet, the waste goes to an inlet box where it breaks down and gives off methane. From the production chamber, the gas goes to an outlet box and flows into the pipes used for cooking,” said Gavin Macmillan, the ICRC’s water and habitat engineer. “Going for alternative sources of energy is a good choice nowadays, given the rising prices of crude oil and other non-renewables,” he added.

Apart from minimizing cooking costs, the biogas project also improved the jail’s sewage system because it replaced the less-



At the Cagayan de Oro City Jail, authorities and inmates now have the option to use biogas to bake bread.

effective septic tanks. “This technology reduces the impact of greenhouse gases and of pathogens that make people sick,” said Macmillan.

The organic waste is also turned into fertilizer for the jail’s own vegetable garden. “The government has limited resources, so the biogas project is a big help to us. We are grateful to the ICRC, because they are helping both the inmates and the environment,” added Jail Supt. Russel Tangeres of CDO jail.

Hot water from the sun

Further down south, another eco-friendly innovation is helping a Bukidnon prison control costs and is opening up the prospect of further sustainable projects.

Valencia City Jail is heating water using solar panels on the kitchen roof. Already, just over a month after installing the panels, cooking time is substantially shorter and the kitchen is using much less firewood.

“Before, we used tap water and heated it over firewood from cold. It usually took three lots of firewood to get it boiling. *Ngayon mabilis na ma-prepare ang pagkain at na-lengthen ang consumption ng kahoy.* (Now we prepare food faster and the firewood lasts longer),” said Sr. Insp. Francis Acelo, who has been Valencia’s warden since 2001.

Acelo was visibly happy about the developments. “The coordination efforts of the LGU, BJMP and other organizations like the ICRC have a huge impact. This shows that problems can easily be solved when people work together. It’s rare for projects to come together like this,” he added.

HEALTH WORKERS ON THE MOVE AGAINST TB IN JAILS



To diagnose if an inmate has TB or not, sputum samples are collected from those who exhibit symptoms such as persistent coughing for at least two weeks. Here, a team of jail nurses are doing laboratory tests on sputum smears collected from inmates. The same samples are submitted to the City Health Office for quality checks.



Various initiatives on TB management have been initiated by the Cebu City Jail administration, including the construction of a new TB isolation ward. Weekly seminars are also conducted by the jail staff to inform inmates about the disease.

Tuberculosis, or TB, is a major health concern worldwide. Based on a recent study of seven detention facilities in the Philippines, the prevalence of this disease inside jails and prisons is up to three times higher than among the general population. To mark World TB Day last March, the ICRC visited Cebu City Jail to look at how the jail's health staff is fighting the disease. TB is an airborne disease considered as one of the leading causes of death in Philippines jails and prisons.

COTABATO HOSPITAL RECEIVES NEW STERILIZER

The ICRC donated a brand-new sterilizer to the Cotabato Regional Medical Center last April 18 to enhance the safety of patients and improve its capacity to provide better health services. The state-of-the-art equipment from Germany uses heat to sterilize dressings, essential materials and instruments for surgery. The center is the only government tertiary hospital in Central Mindanao and provides a vital service to the population in the violence-affected region. The hospital treats many patients from outside Cotabato City, most of them from Maguindanao, but some from as far as Lanao del Sur and Basilan.

Dr. Helen Yambao, the chief of hospital, expressed gratitude for the assistance. She said: "All materials used for surgery – from gowns to water – undergo sterilization as part of infection control. With the new sterilizer, we can provide our patients with an even higher level of safety."

PROFESSORS' CONFAB ON IHL

The ICRC, together with the Ateneo Human Rights Center, will be holding an IHL Professors' Convention on May 16-18 in Davao City. This conference aims to provide university and law professors with updates on recent developments in the field of humanitarian law. It also intends to stimulate academic discussion and research on key IHL-related issues. Among the major topics to be discussed during the convention are: challenges and developments in IHL, Republic Act No. 9851 and international criminal law, and the teaching of IHL in the Philippines.

MOOT COURT COMPETITION ON IHL STARTS EARLY THIS YEAR

The National Moot Court Competition on international humanitarian law (IHL) will take place from September 27-30 this year.

This is an annual event organized by the ICRC and the Philippine Red Cross, in partnership with the Philippine Association of Law Schools and the Supreme Court of the Philippines. The Ateneo de Manila University School of Law, which celebrates its 75th anniversary, is the host school for this year. Winners of the moot court competition will be supported by the ICRC as they proceed to the regional finals in Hong Kong in 2012.

For more information, visit <http://www.redcross.org.ph/feature/ihl-mootcourtcomp2011>.

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