



ICRC

Issue No. 1 June 2009

NEWSLETTER

ICRC PHILIPPINES



James Nachtwey/ICRC VII

150th Anniversary of the Red Cross

EDITORIAL

By Jean-Daniel Tauxe, Head of Delegation

On the battlefields of Solferino in Northern Italy 150 years ago, thousands of French and Austrian soldiers lay wounded or dying after a brutal battle that lasted more than nine hours. It was this appalling sight that moved a young Swiss businessman, Henry Dunant to quick action, organizing the townsfolk into providing care for the wounded and even writing down the last words of the dying to be sent to their next of kin.

The legacy of the battle of Solferino and Dunant sparked what would become a global humanitarian movement. Today, our world faces unprecedented challenges, ranging from conflict and mass displacement to climate change, natural disasters and a global financial crisis. The message of Solferino is the call for “new Henry Dunants” and that every person has the power to make a difference.

Today’s “Solferinos” also require that we as individuals and as groups consider how we can positively affect others in

Thousands of people have been displaced by the fighting in the southern Philippines, between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an armed group. A 79-year-old woman and her grandson stand in front of the home they were forced to flee in August 2008.

one way or another as we highlight the heroism of millions of people worldwide who act selflessly to help others in their greatest moment of need. Hopefully, through this anniversary celebration, people around the world will sit up and take notice of the challenges so many people face and then make a move to help.

The publication of this ICRC Philippines newsletter is dedicated to the spirit of humanitarianism and the call for humanitarian action in today’s world. Through this newsletter, we reiterate the need for “new Henry Dunants” to do whatever they can to help others; and that each of us has the power to make the world a better place and, working together, we can “help the good work forward”, just as Dunant did 150 years ago.

This edition of the newsletter is also dedicated to the three ICRC workers who were abducted in Sulu on January 15, 2009. Two of them, Mary Jean Lacaba and Andreas Notter are now back with their families but one colleague, Eugenio Vagni, still remains in captivity as this newsletter is being prepared for publication. We are ever hopeful that he will likewise be returned safely and unconditionally back to his family soon.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement: A time to focus on humanity

The year 2009 has great significance for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. On 24 June 1859, one man, Henry Dunant, had an idea that has grown into a global movement with nearly 100 million staff and volunteers. His efforts resulted in a network of national Red Cross organizations, the creation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863, and the Geneva Conventions, which give protection to the most vulnerable people in times of war. This year commemorates the 60th Anniversary of the Conventions.

A Movement Campaign

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has launched a global campaign – Our world. Your move. – to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the battle of Solferino and the founding ideal of the spirit of volunteerism.

The campaign activities can be viewed via www.ourworld-yourmove.org, a unique web portal that serves as a gateway for the public to explore the world of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – the challenges we face, the work we do and the people we help. The site also offers an interactive platform for people to tell their stories and show their commitment to humanity.

On the island of Mindanao, two displaced men cross a frequently flooded section of road carrying much-needed ICRC food supplies for which they had waited for hours in the blistering heat.

The 186 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will focus on armed conflict and situations of armed violence.

The International Federation, which is also celebrating its 90th anniversary, will focus on a culture of prevention and what people are doing in communities around the world to help save lives by reducing the impact of disasters, climate change, food insecurity and public health emergencies.

The National Societies carry out their humanitarian activities according to local needs, in line with their own statutes and subject to national law.

Our World – At War Photo Exhibition

The ICRC has teamed up with five of the world's top war photographers to create a new exhibit called Our World – At War. The five photojournalists, James Nachtwey, Ron Haviv, Chris Morris, Franco Pagetti and Antonin Kratochvil, who are all from the New York-based VII Agency, have captured the experience of those affected by fighting, along with their suffering, helplessness, as well as their hope, and their fight for survival. Nachtwey travelled with the ICRC to Central Mindanao.

The exhibition also draws attention to the inspirational attempts that continue to be made, by ordinary men and women, to limit human suffering in some of the most violent corners of the world. It was launched in New York, Geneva, Manila and more than 40 countries worldwide beginning on 8 May 2009.

"Photographs are not cold documents that merely prove something happened. They put a human face on events that might otherwise appear to be abstract or ideological, a matter of statistics or monumental in their global impact. Photography gives a voice to those who otherwise would not have a voice, and it's a call to action."

James Nachtwey



Solferino 2009: A Celebration of the Past, a Challenge for the Future

by Ajeet Panemanglor

There is a Filipino saying that translates roughly to, "One cannot reach where he is going unless he looks back to where he has come from." Thus, it is that, this year, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement looks back to where it has come from, a small town in Italy, Solferino, where the tragedy and violence of battle was transformed by one man, Henry Dunant, into an act of great humanity.

Important celebrations are to be held there in June 2009, involving the youth and recognizing the vital role they have to play in the Movement. Two Filipinos will be joining, Red Cross Youth manager Carlos Gallardo as one of the organizers, and Red Cross Youth volunteer Chester Villanueva.

A variety of activities await the participants, from the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Youth Meeting, where discussions on youth issues will be tackled, to the "Fiaccolata," a candlelit procession from Solferino to the Castiglione Chapel, where Dunant first brought wounded soldiers, capped off by the "Journey of an Idea," which will have everyone proceed, on foot and by bus, from Solferino to Geneva, Switzerland.

Carlos says this is his first time to be part of such a big event. "I am very privileged because of the big responsibility," he adds.

Carlos Gallardo

Chester Villanueva

Chester, a Red Cross Youth volunteer from the La Union chapter, says he was "shocked" to find out that he had been selected as the youth representative to Solferino, and calls this latest "adventure" in his Red Cross experience "a blessing."

But how relevant is Solferino to young people, so many years down the road? "Very," says both Carlos and Chester. "Dunant was a simple person but he envisioned the large movement that we have today," says Carlos, "We need to find new Dunants."

Chester encapsulates the spirit of Solferino in simple words: helping others. "If we could give ourselves, give time to help one another, he says, "it will go a long way." In many ways, this is what Solferino was about, people helping people, a message as relevant now as it was then.

The youth have a big part to play in the Movement, and the Solferino celebrations are recognition of that. Carlos feels the Red Cross Youth is different from other organizations, and credits it for the values he has now.

Chester sums up his feelings by saying to his fellow Red Crossers, "Keep the fire burning, so that the Red Cross will be an organization for the people."

One hundred and fifty years later, the fire that burned in Henry Dunant's heart clearly still burns in the hearts of young people around the world, in countries as far away from Solferino as the Philippines. This year's celebrations are not just a commemoration of an act of humanity over a century ago; they are a challenge to young people, to everyone, to continue in this spirit into the future.

ICRC action in the Philippines: humanity in action

The ICRC has been working in the Philippines since 1982. Through its five offices in Manila, Davao, Cotabato, Zamboanga and Tacloban, the organisation runs a humanitarian operation comprising of both protection and assistance programmes for thousands of people adversely affected by armed conflicts or other situations of violence.

In Central Mindanao, the ICRC, supported by volunteers of the Philippine National Red Cross, regularly distributes food and essential household items to an average of 160,000 internally displaced persons. It also provides them with access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation facilities and supports provision of medical care to those in need through assistance to several health care centers. The ICRC supports capacity building of health workers and hospital doctors through first aid trainings such as the War Surgery Seminar, due to take place in Davao in June.

In addition, the ICRC conducts regular jail visits to people detained in connection with armed conflict or other situations of violence in order to monitor conditions of detention. It also organizes family visits for detainees held in prisons far from their homes.



ICRC assisting displaced people in Iligan, Mindanao, who were forced to flee in August 2008. With the support of the Philippine National Red Cross, the organisation provided food rations, tarpaulins, water containers and mosquito nets. Three health clinics offering treatment to displaced people were provided with essential drugs and medical supplies.

To support the efforts of national authorities in solving humanitarian problems that affect all inmate population in places of detention, the ICRC recently signed an agreement with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) for the improvement of water and sanitation facilities in jails benefiting more than 9,000 prisoners throughout the country. This breakthrough follows another agreement signed in 2008 with ICRC support between BJMP, Department of Health and other Philippine agencies, to fight tuberculosis (TB) in jails.

ICRC in the Philippines:
planned activities in support
of Solferino Campaign

**Inter Arma Caritas Photo Exhibition and
Information Caravan on International
Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Justice.**

Jointly facilitated by the Supreme Court,
the ICRC and the PNRC covering the cities
of Makati, Manila, Quezon, Pasay, Pasig,
Lapu-Lapu, Davao, Angeles and Laoag.

Our World at War Photo Exhibition.

Jointly facilitated by the PNRC and the
ICRC at the SM Mall of Asia, Roxas Blvd.,
June 21-28, 2009.

Humanity in War Photo Exhibition.

Jointly facilitated by the ICRC Cotabato
office and the PNRC Cotabato chapter in
Cotabato City, June 24- 30, 2009.



Our world is in a mess. It's time to make your move.
ourworld-yourmove.org



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross in the Philippines

Manila

5th Floor Erechem Building
corner Rufino and Salcedo Streets
Legaspi Village, Makati City 1229
T +63 2 892 8901/4
F +63 2 819 5997
Email manila.man@icrc.org

Davao

4th Floor Central Plaza 1 Building,
J.P. Laurel Ave, Bajada 8000
Davao City
T +63 82 222 8870/1
F +63 82 222 8694
Email davao.dav@icrc.org

Cotabato

016 R. Garcia Street,
9600 Cotabato City
T +63 64 421 8377 / 55
F +63 64 421 8695
Email cotabato.cot@icrc.org

Tacloban

House 3, Kalipayan Road,
Sagkahan District,
Tacloban City
T +63 53 321 4431
F +63 53 3214432
Email mob_tacloban.man@icrc.org

Zamboanga

Unit 02 Red Cross Youth Hostel Building,
Valderosa St.,
Zamboanga City 7000
T + 63 62 993 2536
F + 63 62 990 1560
Email mob_zamboanga.dav@icrc.org