



Newsletter of the ICRC
Pretoria Regional
Delegation

LOOK OUT FOR...

The latest issue of the International Review of the Red Cross No. 861 on International criminal tribunals

The issue looks at the different international and internationalised criminal tribunals and courts set up since the creation of the two ad hoc Tribunals by the UN Security Council, and inquires into the broader objectives of international criminal law. The issue also includes an article written by ICRC Regional Legal Adviser, Jamie Williamson, who is based in the Pretoria Regional Delegation. It is entitled: **An overview of the international criminal jurisdictions operating in Africa.**

The issue is available on-line in English, some articles are also available in their original language or translated into French.

A yearly selection is published in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish. Visit the ICRC website at www.icrc.org for more information.

MISSION Statement

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Ending illicit Small Arms Availability



*ICRC Regional Legal Adviser at the Pretoria Regional Delegation, **Jamie Williamson**, reflects on small arms availability and the recent Review Conference held in New York.*

On the basis of its experience from conflict and post-conflict situations around the world, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) concluded in the late 1990's that widespread availability of weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, facilitates violations of international humanitarian law (IHL). It has been shown that the uncontrolled availability of illicit small arms, which includes assault rifles, machine guns and hand grenades, and light weapons such as heavy machine-guns and mounted grenade-launchers, has been at the root of much civilian suffering during armed conflicts. Access to the victims is impeded, the delivery of humanitarian assistance is hampered and the lethal effects of the conflict are increased.

The easy availability of illicit small arms also exacerbates the effects of armed conflicts and armed violence in a variety of contexts around the world. Small arms are not only used to kill and injure, but also to intimidate, coerce, rape, forcibly recruit children as combatants, or force people to flee their homes. While most of those killed or injured are men, women and children suffer disproportionately in other ways. Worryingly, the appalling effects of small arms are not only felt in zones of armed conflict but increasingly in areas at 'peace' where death and injury due to small arms violence remain among the highest in the world.

In 2001 the United Nations convened the first global Conference to address this universal concern. A programme of action, whilst not legally binding, committed governments to a variety of measures to exert better control over the trade and use of

these weapons, was adopted. These included establishing national controls on arms production and arms transfers, developing legislation to regulate arms brokering activities, implementing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes in post-conflict situations, including effective collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons, and addressing the special needs of children affected by armed conflict.

Nearly five years after the adoption of the programme, a Review Conference was held in New York from 26 June - 7 July 2006 for States to assess progress and agree on further measures. It had hoped that the Review Conference would result in a comprehensive plan to accelerate action in curtailing the availability of illicit small arms. In its statement at the Review Conference, the ICRC urged States to increase their efforts to prevent illicit brokering of weapons into areas where they facilitate violations of IHL and to limit the unregulated availability of ammunition.

Unfortunately, the delegations at the Review Conference did not reach agreement on a final document, with there being a number of divergent views on a number of key issues. However States participating in the Review Conference reaffirmed their commitment to fully implement the existing Programme of Action. A number of global as well as regional initiatives to regulate the availability of small arms are underway. Africa as a continent severely affected by unregulated arms availability is at the forefront of such efforts.

While the outcome of the Review Conference may not have been as successful as hoped, it is crucial that regional and national efforts are maintained over the next few years. These are first steps in ensuring that the human suffering and number of victims resulting from small arms violence are reduced.

There exists a range of activities embarked upon by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the other constituent members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in alleviating suffering through the provision of medical assistance and expertise. At one pole of that range is an aspect to the response to the conflict in southern Lebanon; at the other pole is support for dedicated and committed First Aid programmes – such as those offered by the late Patricia Mpholefole of the South African Red Cross Society.

When first created in 1863, one of the principle concerns of the ICRC was to ensure that soldiers wounded during the course of battle received appropriate care. While still of concern today, the nature of the ICRC's medical response is considerably wider.

Thus, the ICRC makes available medical and surgical supplies to hospitals and dispensaries across the world. The supplies so offered are not limited to those linked directly to medical assistance. Indeed, on occasion, it is the ICRC that supplies the fuel that generates the energy that makes possible theatre operating facilities and X-ray equipment. Further, in circumstances where the influx of the wounded is so overwhelming that local staff is unable to cope, ICRC medical staff and those with the necessary expertise attached to National Societies will often be required to intervene.

The expertise gained in such circumstances is shared through the training of further medical staff, whether expatriate volunteers or local doctors previously unable to cope with the consequences of devastating disaster.

Apart from the wounded and sick, the ICRC also attempts to provide for the needs of the population as a whole through fostering a healthy living environment. This might be achieved through ensuring appropriate hygiene and a constant supply of food and water; or, in more dire circumstances, ICRC teams of sanitary engineers and technicians might be called upon to repair water-supply and waste-disposal systems.

Those whose lives have been devastated as a result of disaster – such as persons handicapped because of landmines – are also addressed. Not all countries are able to provide medical care to many such victims. Consequently, the ICRC has been instrumental in establishing orthopaedic workshops around the world that produce artificial limbs, crutches and wheelchairs – thus ensuring that amputees are able to enjoy as normal a life as is possible. Ideally, the workshops are also used to train local health staff to continue the effort on the departure of the ICRC experts.

Indeed, in all of its efforts it is a principal aim of the ICRC to develop the capacity of the inhabitants of a country so that they are able, independently, to provide appropriate and relevant medical assistance. With this objective in mind, the ICRC regularly helps National Societies to build up their capacity so that they might better respond to emergency situations. In particular, the ICRC supports the initiation of training courses for first-aid programmes. Once established these programmes are assisted in developing their organisational infrastructure as well as honing their expertise in life-saving techniques.

In ways great and small, the ICRC remains committed to one of its foundational objective – assisting the wounded and the sick.

Garth ABRAHAM

Since the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stepped up its operations in both Lebanon and Israel. Specialised delegates were sent into the conflict zone on both sides in order to reinforce the ICRC's humanitarian response to the crisis.

The Regional Cooperation Delegate of the Pretoria Regional Delegation, Mr Martin Hahn was sent to the region for three weeks in order to assist the process of operationalising the ICRC's humanitarian response during the conflict. ICRC has large scale cooperation programmes with the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC), the Red Star of David (Magen David Adom) and with the Palestine Red Crescent Society; the latter two National Societies became full members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in June this year.

Following the cessation of hostilities, internally displaced persons in Lebanon and persons who had sought refuge in Syria started returning to their homes in southern Lebanon, the southern suburbs of Beirut and other areas. Many of those who returned found themselves without shelter and had no access to daily necessities such as water, food and medical care. As a direct consequence of military action, hundreds of apartment buildings and houses were partially or totally destroyed, electrical installations were damaged and medical centres were in dire need of medical supplies.

The ICRC, in cooperation with the LRC,

is conducting its humanitarian activities throughout southern Lebanon and in the Bekaa Valley, and has launched relief operations in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

One thousand households in urgent need of assistance have received relief supplies which the ICRC began distributing in cooperation with the LRC on 30 August. In the southern suburbs of the capital, 25 000 people were supplied with drinking water by means of water trucks manned by the ICRC and the LRC Youth Section. The ICRC and the LRC are operating from two warehouses in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

Relief operations in the Tyre and Sidon areas included distribution of food and other essentials. To date, almost 260 000 people (some 52 000 families) have benefited from emergency aid provided by the ICRC.

During August, ICRC president, Mr Jacob Kellenberger visited the affected areas in southern Lebanon and northern Israel and stated that the main victims in the conflict have been civilians. He emphasised the need for access to those most in need of humanitarian assistance and welcomed the ceasefire.

During his visit, Mr Kellenberger met with President Lahoud, Prime Minister Siniora and Speaker of Parliament Berri in Beirut. He then travelled to the southern city of Tyre to witness some of the difficulties facing the humanitarian mission as



Haifa, Israel. Israeli paramedics evacuating soldiers to hospital. ICRC/GUTMAN A.

(Continued on page 3)

the price of conflict

(Continued from page 2)

it tries to reach those affected by the conflict.

The LRC continue to deliver a superb service in all aspects, in particular with its ambulance and first aid volunteers. It is mainly the LRC that evacuates the sick and wounded and has collected the dead from beneath the rubble. The coordination of all Movement players during this conflict has been exemplary.

Meanwhile, in the occupied and autonomous territories, since Mr Kellenberger's talks in Israel, the ICRC has been able to resume its family visits programme thus enabling relatives to visit those being held in Israeli places of detention.



ICRC president Jakob Kellenberger crossing the Litani river in southern Lebanon. ICRC/KOKIC M.



ICRC Health Delegate Verena Krebs discusses alternate routes to the town of Houla from Tyre.

ICRC activities in the field

In Lebanon: As at 30 August the ICRC together with the LRC has assisted 52 000 families with food and/or essential household items. Water and habitat engineers supplied over 200 000 people with clean drinking water.

To enable the conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent operations in Lebanon:

- 5 logistic bases have been activated: Amman, Larnaca, Beirut, Tyre, Sidon;
- 56 charters have transported 2,156 metric tonnes of goods;
- 2 vessels chartered by the ICRC have transported from Larnaca (Cyprus) and Mersin (Turkey) 2,586 metric tonnes of goods and around 100,000 litres of fuel to Beirut, Sidon and Tyre;
- 10 ICRC international road convoys have carried 673 metric tonnes of relief between Amman and Beirut with the support of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and ICRC Damascus for transit through Syria;
- in total, 4,722 metric tonnes of relief supplies have already been transported to Lebanon from Amman (Jordan), Larnaca (Cyprus) and Mersin (Turkey);
- ICRC road convoys have transported emergency supplies from Beirut to Tyre and Sidon, and from Sidon to Tyre.

Goodbye to a colleague and friend

On 20 August, Ms Patricia Mpholefole from the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) Pretoria branch passed away suddenly. Patricia joined the Society in 1996 as an administrator for the branch and later became the First Aid Instructor. Here, Mr Martin Hahn, ICRC Cooperation Delegate and Deputy Head of Delegation pays tribute to a wonderful friend and colleague.

I heard the news about Patricia's departure on 24 August, the day after I returned from an operational mission to Israel. I remembered the first week of my posting a year ago in Pretoria when I had the pleasure to meet Patricia in my office. She was full of enthusiasm for her SARCS work and her spirit was so refreshing. Her dedication especially for the First Aid programme was palpable.



Now she is gone and we are left behind. If there is any legacy in her early departure it is to continue our humanitarian work with

a similar spirit and commitment. Together with several of my ICRC colleagues who knew Patricia personally I was honoured to attend the memorial ceremony at the SARCS Pretoria branch. Despite the heartfelt sorrow that everyone felt there was a sense of profound will to stay the course in her spirit. I hope that we will succeed in displaying a similar dedication in our individual environment, the same commitment and enthusiasm for our humanitarian work, each one at her and his place. We are sending the warmest greetings to Patricia. You will be missed. Our condolences go to the Mpholefole family for their loss.

Martin and the ICRC team in the Pretoria delegation.

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First EHL teacher-training workshop held in Mauritius

During July, the Mauritius Ministry of Education organised in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Pretoria Regional Delegation a five day workshop that gathered high school teachers who will pilot the Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL)* programme in the public schools.

The workshop saw a massive participation of 128 teachers of Social Sciences and English. It also mobilised seven international trainers (USA, South Africa, Seychelles and Malaysia) who came to share their expertise with the Mauritius community.

The Minister of Education, who officially opened the workshop in the presence of the Head of Delegation from the ICRC as well as the Minister of Justice, promised his full support to the programme and committed himself to include it in the curriculum in 2008. The President of the Mauritius Commission of Human Rights, the Head of the Law Department at the Mauritius University as well as members of the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL) also took part to the opening session.

Throughout the week, teachers became more and more enthusiastic about teaching from the EHL curriculum. For most, it was an inspiring and eye-opening experience with respect to the knowledge they gained about IHL. Participants also became every engaged with the active pedagogy utilised in the curriculum and most were excited to begin implementation. The EHL Virtual Campus, an educational tool that gives educators and students online access to various resources and continuously updates them on new developments was also presented. Participants

were encouraged to make good use of the new technology and to share experiences and practices with their colleagues and trainers.

2007 will be a pilot year for the programme in Mauritius with adjustments to be made as necessary afterwards. Teachers will begin to experiment with EHL activities and explorations in their classrooms with the students. They will choose those which they believe are most appropriate for their students and which best support their curriculum. They are encouraged to improvise as they see fit to make each EHL lesson important to their students. After each EHL lesson, students will complete a daily ballot so that the teacher can gauge their learning and 'attitudes' regarding EHL.

Twenty-four teachers who were selected as future trainers will be involved in planning and conducting a shorter teacher training for their regional colleagues during the November - January holiday so that EHL may be piloted, as planned, nationally in January 2007.

It is worth mentioning the great role played by the Mauritius Red Cross Society in the preparation of the workshop. The Society is an integral partner for the ICRC in the follow up of the programme and will accompany the Ministry of Education in the ownership of the programme.

**The Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) programme is educational and designed to introduce adolescents to the basic rules and principles of international humanitarian law and related issues. It makes use of effective learning methods and participatory pedagogy through thirty hours of classroom activities. It is available in 24 languages.*



Teachers and trainers at the Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) workshop which was held in Mauritius in July.