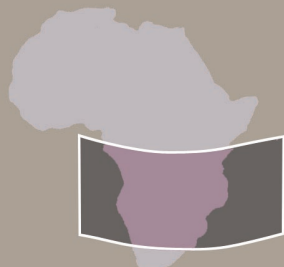




ICRC



Newsletter of the ICRC  
Pretoria Regional  
Delegation

### LOOK OUT FOR...

Red Cross / Red Crescent Magazine: "The Movement and the armed forces" – Issue 3, 2008

This issue looks at the forthcoming 150th anniversary of the battle of Solferino, the magazine also takes a look at how the relationship between the Movement and the armed forces has evolved, notably through the lens of the conflict in Afghanistan. Also in this issue: a new order in Paraguay, helping in Georgia, today's Dunants – "Our world. Your move." and the story of an idea – in pictures. Red Cross / Red Crescent magazine covers a range of humanitarian issues. Articles include features on the activities of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies as they seek to help people around the world.

The magazine is available at on the ICRC website at:  
<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/pb102?opendocument>

### 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.

# Themba

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FIRST QUARTER



## Volunteers provide vital relief

In the small, oil-stained courtyard behind the Malagasy Red Cross (MRC) National Office, the ambulances are being cleaned out and prepared for another day on duty. Dozens of volunteers are at work – shifting boxes of dressing kits, loading the truck and re-checking supplies in the vehicles.

Most of them have been on standby since 9am, but the march is planned for 12 and its time to get organised and to get the teams pre-positioned at strategic points in Antananarivo, the capital of this mini-continent in the Indian Ocean.

'Tana', as the city is known, has been the scene of political confrontation since mid January, when the Mayor called the population to demonstrate against the head of state. In the weeks that followed, repeated protests and strikes have been the norm, with occasional violence, looting, burning and shootings that have left scores of people dead and injured.

In this tense situation, the MRC has been consistently there for the victims – with teams standing by in case, or sent out to establish first aid posts near to any planned gatherings or marches. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), from its office in Tana, has been supporting them with first aid materials, stretchers and funding, but it's the staff and volunteers who provide the vital human element – people on a mission to provide relief.

MRC volunteers, it turns out, come from all sorts of backgrounds. A few took time out to talk about themselves and their reasons for being here carrying boxes on a sunny Saturday morning.

Rado describes himself as a shopkeeper and has been volunteering for the Red Cross for two years. He likes the training he gets and is now himself a community trainer on sanitation and hygiene, as well as a first aider. Rado was there on duty the day a number of protesters were shot but he seems unshaken by the experience. "I'm former military myself," he explains "and I'm not afraid of anything!"



Madagascar. Antananarivo. A seriously injured person is transferred to a Malagasy Red Cross vehicle for evacuation to hospital. Photo courtesy of the Malagasy Red Cross (02/2009)

Alice's motivation and concerns are more traditional – she wants to help people who are suffering. For a year, she has been involved in the MRC water and sanitation education project and with youth training, but did not hesitate to offer her first aid skills when the situation turned bad. Alice has kids and a husband at home who worry about her being out during these violent days – but she is anxious to get back to the job of preparation with the other volunteers. Both she and Rado have been here six days-a-week since January, on standby or helping the injured. Both seem ready to go on helping for as long as it takes.

It can't hurt their motivation that the work of the National Society has been highlighted in the local press – after all MRC is the only organisation providing these first aid and transfer services during the tensions. The hospitals, too, praise their role and the communities themselves are expressing appreciation for the volunteers' efforts. One first aid team leader recounts, embarrassed, that he finds it difficult to queue for bread now. "They just push me to the front, saying 'This guy is with the Red Cross, let him through'".

Njaka paid for a first aid training course in 2004, but came back to MRC to help and to volunteer in January. The Red Cross gives him and others a chance to help and make a difference, without having to take a side in the political fight – that's why he is here.



The end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 brought many challenges for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Firstly, renewed fighting in Gaza not only claimed lives but left thousands of people homeless and without running water (see page 3).

Secondly, the ICRC was shocked to learn about the abduction of three colleagues in the Philippines. Mary-Jean, Andreas and Eugenio were abducted in early January and at the time of going to print were still being held hostage in Jolo. The Pretoria Regional Delegation wishes to extend its support to the families of our colleagues and hopes for a speedy resolution.

Thirdly, the conflict in Sri Lanka came under the spotlight again at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009 after fighting between the government and the Tamil Tigers intensified. The ICRC's particular concern lies with the scores of civilians trapped within the combat zones.

But, let us not forget the countless other conflicts continuing, not only on this continent but also elsewhere. Civilians being targeted in Afghanistan, political unrest in Madagascar (see page 1,) the ongoing conflicts in Somalia, DRC and Sudan, just to name a few. The humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe has captured the attention of audiences worldwide. On page 3 our Communications Delegate based in Harare tells the story of ordinary people affected by the cholera epidemic in that country. This crisis however has not only affected Zimbabweans but has spilled over into South Africa where the South African Red Cross (SARCS) has done incredible work. We also salute our colleagues from the Zimbabwe Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC delegation in Zimbabwe for their tremendous work in trying to maintain the human dignity of the countless victims affected by the crisis.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the battle of Solferino, a battle that gave birth to the idea of the Red Cross in 1859. Several other anniversaries will be celebrated this year; the 90th anniversary of the Federation and the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. To celebrate all this, and to bring attention to the plight of so many victims of conflict and natural disaster worldwide, the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement\* will in May this year launch a global campaign. The campaign, entitled 'Our World. Your Move', is a call to action to make a difference. Read more about the campaign on page 4.

Several changes have taken place within the Pretoria Regional Delegation. As announced in the previous Themba, the delegation no longer covers the islands of the Indian Ocean. From January, the delegation covers Mozambique and as of July, Angola in addition to South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho.

Lastly, in the last three months the delegation said goodbye to Ivan Muller (IT delegate) and his wife Anna, Administrator André von Ah and his partner. We would like to specifically thank Anna for her artwork that made the 2009 calendar a huge success and which will be on exhibit at the Old Women's Jail at Constitutional Hill from 24 June to 3 July. We welcome Martial Challandes (IT delegate) and his family, Aline Mukamabano (Administrator) and her family and Sarah Swart (Legal Assistant) to the delegation.\*

Annemarie Watt

## Zimbabwe: ICRC extends support to rural areas

**The ICRC is supporting the health authorities' efforts to cope with the cholera epidemic. Since December 2008 it has extended its assistance to rural areas. The ICRC's Communications Delegate based in Harare, Robin Waudo, reports:**

The disease has claimed more than 3,200 lives and over 63,000 cases have been recorded. This is the worst epidemic in 14 years and no part of the country has been spared. Although the situation is now improving in the capital, Harare, the epidemic is still spreading in remote rural areas.

The epidemic's spread is due mainly to a lack of awareness among the rural population of how to stave off the disease and to insufficient water and sanitation infrastructure. These problems are compounded by poor nutrition brought on by the economic crisis.

Chinhoyi is a small town 115 kilometres from the capital in the north-western part of the country. It is situated in one of the areas worst affected by cholera, with almost 4,000 recorded cases and more than 140 deaths.

When the health authorities set up a temporary cholera treatment centre in Chinhoyi's community hall, it was the only point of treatment in the district. But due to the significant increase in infection rates and deaths related to cholera in impoverished rural communities, the health authorities set up an additional nine satellite treatment units in other rural areas.

The cholera treatment unit in the village of Nyamupamire is 65 kilometres from Chinhoyi, it consists of 11 tents, eight of which were donated by the ICRC. A group of five people are walking towards the entrance. One of them is pushing a wheelbarrow which another is tugging with a rope attached to the front. On this improvised mode of transportation lies a person under an old blanket. Two health workers go to help. They show the group to the tented "consultation room." The head nurse removes the blanket to find an elderly woman who is very thin and in pain. He quickly examines her and gives instructions to the nurses. The old woman is taken to the tented "female ward," where cholera treatment begins immediately with an intravenous infusion.



A family member prepares the elderly cholera patient to be admitted at the medical unit for treatment. ICRC/R. Waudo. 2009.

## Gaza: Life after the conflict

More than two months after the end of the conflict, life is slowly returning to normal. For the health facilities, which were stretched beyond their reach during the hostilities, assistance will still be needed to keep them running and to assist the many victims who were seriously injured or disabled.

On 27 December 2008, what seemed to be a never-ending caseload of severely wounded and bleeding patients started



A beneficiary of ICRC assistance transports food parcels to his home. ICRC/ A. Meier

overwhelming hospital emergency rooms. At Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, doctors had to operate on two patients at once in each operating theatre to keep up. Now, however, the numbers of patients have dropped and the emergency rooms are once again treating patients with less serious injuries.

People in the Gaza Strip are still struggling to rebuild their lives. Tens of thousands of people have had their houses partially or completely destroyed, while thousands remain without access to running water.

An assessment done by the ICRC and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in the hardest hit areas of Gaza showed that the conflict completely destroyed more than 2 800 houses and partially destroyed almost 1 900, leaving tens of thousands homeless. So far, the ICRC has given plastic sheeting to cover broken windows and holes in walls, as well as kitchen sets, mattresses and blankets.

### Since the start of the conflict the ICRC:

- health teams assessed the needs of 12 hospitals throughout the Gaza Strip
- collected information on more than 100 people registered by their families as missing during the conflict, in an attempt to find out what happened to them and to restore contact between them and their loved ones.
- provided the Artificial Limb and Polio Center in Gaza City with plastic sheeting to cover the roof and windows broken during the fighting.
- working with the PRCS, collected 150 Red Cross messages from families for their relatives detained in Israel
- coordinated with the parties during the fighting, in particular the Israel Defense Forces, to ensure safe passage for teams of local technicians to repair damaged water and power supply installations
- delivered three generators for water pumping stations in Khan Younis
- provided essential spare parts for urgent repairs and the maintenance of hospital water supply and sewage evacuation infrastructure.

After a month of emergency repairs, essential infrastructure is now functioning at the same level as it was before the conflict erupted in

Life for the people of Gaza will never be the same as many have lost everything. The ICRC together with the PRCS is working to help the people of Gaza rebuild not just their lives but their homes and families.

### ICRC and PRCS

Since the beginning of the conflict, the ICRC has delivered medical supplies, such as tracheotomy tubes and ventilator tubing, as well as strong painkillers to the Central Disposable and Drug Stores in Gaza City. Medicines for relieving severe pain were supplied to the Central Drug Store. In addition, body bags were given to the PRCS ambulance service.

The ICRC has a range of other assistance and support activities for families affected by the conflict. These range from helping families, livelihood support projects and rehabilitation of the water and power supplies.

late December. But much still needs to be done to restore the livelihoods of the people affected by the conflict.





ICRC

# Themba



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Protection Delegate /

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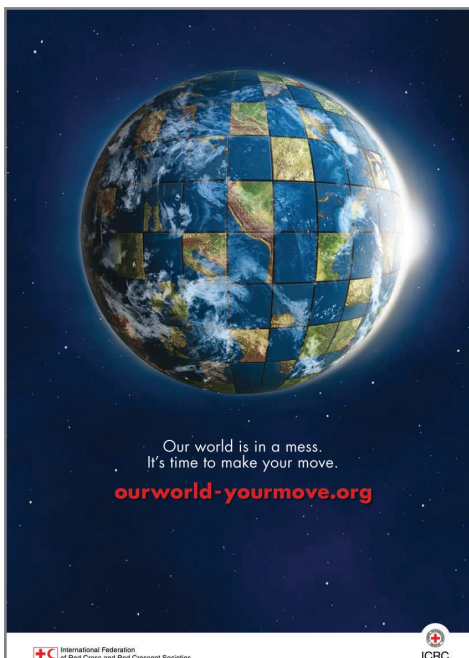
\*The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made up by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 186 National Societies worldwide.

## A global campaign for change

Our world is in a mess. Conflicts, violence and natural disasters have left millions dead, injured, displaced or homeless since the idea of the Red Cross was born in 1859. But somewhere in all the chaos there are people who are trying to make a difference. Millions of Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers and workers make a difference in the lives of victims of conflict, violence and natural disaster on a daily basis.

This year, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement\* will jointly run a campaign called 'Our World. Your Move'. The campaign will be run by the Movement on a global level to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Solferino, a battle whose consequences directly resulted in the birth of the Red Cross. It is a call to action for individuals everywhere to reach out and help others, whether it be close to home or beyond.

The Movement will launch a website in March ([www.ourworld-yourmove.org](http://www.ourworld-yourmove.org)). It will be a gateway



for members of the public to see the world of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – challenges being faced, work done and people that are assisted. There will also be an interactive space for people to tell stories and for National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies to highlight their work. People can then register on the website and "make their move" to put the world back together.

As part of the global campaign the ICRC Pretoria Regional Delegation will in June this year host an art and photographic exhibition entitled "150 years of humanity: the Red Cross in action". It will feature artwork and photos exhibiting the work of the Red Cross, past and present, as well as a selection of photos of the work of the organisation during the Apartheid years. Several former prisoners, who were visited by the ICRC during their confinement, will give testimony on the importance of the Red Cross in a commemorative booklet to be put together and will be present during the opening of the exhibition.\*



The Head of the ICRC Pretoria Regional Delegation, Catherine Gendre (second from right) and ICRC Regional Legal Advisor, Chris Black (far left) visited Swaziland earlier in the year and had a very good meeting with the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs Mr Ndumiso Mamba (right). Also in the picture is Mr Sicelo M Dlamini (second left), Principle Secretary in the Ministry of Justice and Mr Elliot Jele, representative of the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society.