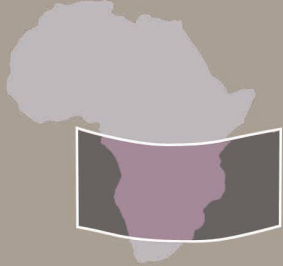




ICRC



Newsletter of the ICRC  
Pretoria Regional  
Delegation

**LOOK OUT FOR...**

- The *Cluster Munitions: Time to Act* information kit sheds some light on the effects of cluster munitions which can contain up to 650 explosive submunitions. These are often scattered over a wide area and many of them fail to explode as intended. As a result, they have caused death, injury and suffering among civilians in nearly every conflict they have been used.
- The 8 min. from the field DVD titled *Chechnya rising from its ashes*. The DVD concentrates on the people of Chechnya and ICRC's assistance as they try to rebuild their lives after the devastating conflict. Despite reconstructions, finding accommodation or a job is difficult. The ICRC helps people to start their own businesses and assists with tracing needs for families desperate to know what has happened to their missing relatives.
- The *revised* brochure of the *ICRC in Action*.

**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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SECOND QUARTER



## Movement responds to urban violence in South Africa

On 11 May this year, violence erupted in Alexandra Township, north of Johannesburg. Locals turned on foreigners, mainly from Mozambique and Zimbabwe, attacked them and forced them to flee their homes. The violence quickly spread throughout the Gauteng Province and to other provinces, leaving thousands of people displaced.

Among those fleeing their homes were refugees, asylum seekers and foreigners with work permits or permanent residency in South Africa as well as South African citizens.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, consisting of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) sprung into action.

The SARCS was first on the scene and has also

taken the lead on the response of the Movement to the violence. SARCS mobilised its volunteers and staff immediately and continues to work around the clock to assist those affected by the urban violence. SARCS volunteers have provided victims with first aid and distributed mainly food and blankets as well as hygiene and baby products. Volunteers and staff have been working in shifts, often in dangerous and difficult conditions, bringing relief and comfort to those affected by violence.

Since the beginning of the attacks, SARCS has deployed some hundreds of staff and volunteers from 35 branches to assist in the temporary shelters around the country where displaced people have found refuge. So far, the National Society has distributed more than 80,000 food and non-food items to affected and displaced people.

The SARCS has also set up a tracing service for missing family members, in collaboration with the ICRC. This tracing service will enable people

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A South African Red Cross Society Staff member hands over a food parcel to one of the people being housed at the Rand Airport Shelter. ICRC/WATT A. 2008

# EDITORIAL

The recent violence in South Africa left tens of thousands of people homeless and many dead or injured. It is times like these that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can make a difference.

During the period of violence in South Africa the South African Red Cross Society with all its volunteers showed tremendous courage and helped the most vulnerable in sometimes difficult circumstances. On pages 1 and 2 we look at how the Movement responded to the crisis.

As in Kenya, the legacy of such violence remains long after the bullets and machetes. The humanitarian consequences are enormous but the Movement will continue to assist those in need it whoever they may be.

During the second quarter, the Pretoria Regional Delegation also celebrated World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, which celebrates not only the birthday of the founding father of the Red Cross, Mr Henry Dunant, but also the actions of the Movement throughout the world in acting "Together for Humanity".

One of the delegation's oldest and most loyal employees, Susan Newall who joined the ICRC in 1986 as a secretary officially retired at the end of June. She has however agreed to stay and assist the delegation on a temporary basis for the next year. Susan is currently the Head of the Secretariat and the Personal Assistant to the Head of Delegation. "Madam Speaker", from all at the delegation enjoy your much deserved time off.

Also, Nicole Kruger, Assistant to the Cooperation Department, who officially retired in September 2007 has been assisting the delegation on a half time basis. She will finish her contract in December. Nicole joined the delegation in January 2001.

Furthermore, the delegation has seen several other staff changes and additions. Thomas Anderson (Logistics) and Leanmore Banhwa (Accountant) joined the delegation while Naeema Moonda (Accountant) left. The Secretariat also saw the addition of Chantal Kiburente as a junior secretary.

In the Legal Department, Christopher Black joined us after the departure of Regional Legal Advisor, Jamie Williamson, who finished his mission on 18 June. The department also saw the addition of Janine Shasha as IHL Legal Officer/EHL Officer.

**Annemarie Watt**

(Continued from page 1)

who lost contact with their loved ones, while fleeing their homes, to find them and to re-establish contact.

The ICRC has particular expertise in this field as it has a Central Tracing Agency, which together with Tracing Services of almost all National Societies around the world facilitates the restoration of family links. The current situation in South Africa has forced many people to return to their countries. The SARCS, with assistance from the ICRC is now coordinating with several other Red Cross Societies in the region, like the Mozambique Red Cross in order to assist people to locate family members.

The support to the SARCS has been overwhelming. An initial appeal by the Society of R1 million was increased to R7 million, which has already been met through the generous donations from

South African companies and the public.

The International Federation Southern Africa Zone office – through their country representative for South Africa - is liaising on a daily basis with the ICRC and working very closely with SARCS, providing them with technical assistance and support. This support has included expertise in operations and relief management, logistics and procurement as well as communications, media relations and donor liaison.

The International Federation has also assisted SARCS by mobilizing its staff at its Zone Office, providing technical support as well as additional human and financial resources.



One of the foreigners displaced by the recent violence in South Africa holds his daughter and a ration card to receive goods from the South African Red Cross Society. IFRC/ERFANI-GHADIMI N. 2008





In March 2008 an internal conflict broke out in the Comoros. The ICRC opened a small office there during this time and also assisted the Comoros Red Crescent Society (CRCS) in responding to the crisis. Here volunteers of the CRCS unload relief supplies that arrived by boat. The ICRC also sent a surgical team from 19 to 31 March. The team consisted of a surgeon, an anaesthetist and a nurse. ICRC/ZULLINO N. 2008

## World Red Cross Red Crescent Day celebrated

"Together for Humanity", this was the theme for the 149<sup>th</sup> World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day celebration in South Africa. Guests were welcomed by the beautiful singing of the Soweto Red Cross Choir accompanied with drum beats to the song. The event was attended by representatives from the different Embassies, government departments, the media and the Movement.

The South African Red Cross Society (SARCS), together with their Movement partners, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, celebrated this event on 8 May at the Pretoria Country Club, re-affirming their commitment to alleviating human suffering and calling for "Action Beyond Borders." World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day is not only the birthday of its founder, Henry Dunant, but also a day to remember, that no boundaries can stop the Red Cross activities and actions. This year's theme highlighted the power and strength of acting together to provide support for those in need and help to protect human dignity.

Speeches by former President of the SARCS, Mandisa Kalako-Williams, Françoise Le Goff, Head of Zone for the International Federation and Catherine Gendre, Head of ICRC Regional Delegation for Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, emphasised

the importance of the emblems of humanity as symbols of assistance and how they continue to bring a sense of hope to millions affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters throughout the world.

January 2008 marked the one year anniversary of the coming into effect of the Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, which introduced a third protective Emblem in the effort to end proliferation of the Emblems. In use are the three Emblems of Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Crystal, globally recognized symbols of assistance for the victims of armed

conflicts and natural disasters.

The celebration also marked the launching of a 90-day campaign for the correct use of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Emblems. In August 2007, President Thabo Mbeki passed the South African Red Cross Society and Legal Protection of Certain Emblems Act 2007 into South African law. The Act recognises the National Society formally as an auxiliary to the public authorities and provides statutory protection for the emblems of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



The Soweto Choir of the South African Red Cross Society entertained guests at the World Red Cross Red Crescent Day celebrations on 8 May. They were accompanied by Mr Charles Mugerwa from the Pan African Music and Dance Ensemble (PAMADE) at the University of Pretoria.





ICRC

# Themba



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## Seminar reviews latest developments in IHL

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been described as the guardian of international humanitarian law (IHL). I see that the ICRC emphasises implementation of IHL. Unless States have developed a bureaucracy with expertise in this area, the ICRC has a vital role in assisting States which do not have such a capacity, apart from the important work that it does to educate the general public about the principles of IHL." These were the words of Professor Kader Asmal, Professor Extraordinary at the University of the Western Cape during the opening ceremony of the Eighth Annual Regional Seminar on the implementation of IHL.

Governmental representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Police and/or, Defence from Southern and Eastern Africa, namely Angola, Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Kenya, Lesotho, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were represented at this year's seminar, which was held at the Sheraton Hotel from 10 to 13 June and co-hosted by the Department of Foreign Affairs of South Africa.

Focus was once again placed on the ratification and implementation of IHL and to furthering a regional dynamic for the full implementation of these instruments. Latest developments in IHL were discussed and attention was given to weapons conventions including the newly adopted Oslo Convention on cluster munitions, which will be open for signing from December this year in Oslo, Norway.

The participants noted that IHL continues to develop and adapt to new circumstances, changing conflicts and new actors and weaponry, and that much of this evolution can be credited to the willingness of States today to put in place mechanisms that alleviate the suffering of victims of armed conflict. It was also noted though that while many States have ratified the majority of instruments, efforts still need to be

made to integrate these into national law.

Furthermore, it was noted that the problem of explosive remnants of war is relevant for the region, and that States address this humanitarian problem in part through the consideration of accession to, and implementation of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, in particular its Fifth Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War.

The participants adopted a set of conclusions and recommendations at the end of the seminar which included: to give a higher priority in their policy and programmes to publicising, applying and promoting respect for IHL; that States accede to international humanitarian law treaties to which they are not yet party; and to examine existing legislation and, where necessary, that States adopt appropriate, effective legislation to implement those international humanitarian law treaties to which they are a party; and to consider establishing and/or strengthening effective National Committees.



Professor Kader Asmal, Professor Extraordinary at the University of the Western Cape together with Mrs Catherine Gendre, Head of the ICRC Pretoria Regional Delegation after he opened the Eighth Annual Regional Seminar on IHL in Pretoria.