

## Module 5

# Responding to the consequences of armed conflict

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What are the consequences of war?  
What effort is needed to respond to them?  
What dilemmas may humanitarian organizations face?



ICRC

International Committee of the Red Cross

19, avenue de la Paix

1202 Geneva, Switzerland

**T** +41 22 734 60 01 **F** +41 22 733 20 57

**E-mail:** [shop.gva@icrc.org](mailto:shop.gva@icrc.org) **www.**[ehl.icrc.org](http://ehl.icrc.org)

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# Module 5

# 5

## Responding to the consequences of armed conflict

### EXPLORATIONS (6 sessions)

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### CONCEPTS

Basic needs  
Non-material needs  
Refugees and other displaced persons  
Impartiality  
Neutrality  
Independence

### In all modules:

Human dignity  
Obstacles to humanitarian behaviour  
Dilemmas  
Consequences  
Multiple perspectives

### SKILLS PRACTISED

Perspective taking  
Estimating scope  
Estimating effort  
Dilemma analysis  
Identifying consequences  
Working in groups



If you have limited time and are unable to work through all the explorations, we recommend that you follow at least the short pathway of explorations marked with this icon.

## Exploration 5A: Needs that arise from the devastation of war

Module 5 assesses the devastation caused by war and the effort needed to respond to it. In Exploration 5A, students examine a number of photos to consider the resources that are lost and the needs arising from such

losses. Then they reflect on what is required to address those needs. Students also consider the experiences of people who have been forced to leave their homes as a consequence of war.

### OBJECTIVES

- to understand how war disrupts the ordinary supports of life
- to become aware of the scope of humanitarian action needed to prevent and reduce the suffering caused by armed conflict



### TEACHER RESOURCES

5A.1 ICRC activities in Colombia, 2006



### STUDENT RESOURCES

5A.2 Photo collage 2A (see separate sheet in Module 2)

5A.3 Affected by armed conflict – Colombia 2006

5A.4 Video and transcript: *Forced from home* (4'10)  DVD

### PREPARATION

In the *Methodology Guide*, review teaching methods 1 (Discussion), 2 (Brainstorming), 6 (Using stories, photos and videos), 7 (Writing and reflecting) and 9 (Small groups).

If possible, view the relevant chapter of the training film for teachers (*Module 5*).

### TIME

One 45-minute session

# The exploration

## 1. NEEDS THAT RESULT FROM ARMED CONFLICT (15 minutes)

Have each student choose one photo from "Photo collage 2A" and make a list of the needs of the people in that picture.

### STUDENT 5A.2 RESOURCES

Have students, in small groups, discuss the pictures they chose, identifying:

- the resources they see destroyed or lost;
- the needs of the people in the photos.

Ask the small groups to note not only visible signs of destruction, such as destroyed buildings, but other kinds of damage as well, such as the damage done to utilities and to personal belongings, the deaths of family members and friends, the separation of families, the psychological impact of war and the loss of community services.

Reconvene the class to compile their lists of resources destroyed and the resulting human needs.

### Possible questions:

- > What further consequences might people in such situations face?
- > What other losses will people suffer as a result of the destroyed resources?
- > What kinds of action might help people cope with these consequences of armed conflict?
- > Are certain types of action more urgent than others? What might be the criteria for prioritizing the level of emergency?
- > Who generally requires special attention in such emergencies? Why?  
[For example: children, women, the elderly, those in need of medical care]

*I would like to go back to my home. But in some cases, whole villages have been destroyed, so an individual doesn't have any chance of going back to that village.*  
– a displaced woman, Bosnia-Herzegovina

*I couldn't see what I stepped on. I was running and suddenly I heard an explosion.*  
– a 14-year-old boy who stepped on a landmine in Afghanistan

*When I perform an amputation on a boy like him, I feel as if I'm cutting off my own foot.*  
– the doctor who treated him

## 2. RESPONDING TO NEEDS (15 minutes)

Explain to students that governments have the primary responsibility for responding to the needs arising from the devastation of war. Many humanitarian organizations, working together, assist them in this task. Emphasize the fact that under international humanitarian law (IHL), countries must allow civilians access to humanitarian relief.

*[Examples of humanitarian organizations include: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); various UN organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Save the Children, Handicap International and OXFAM; and many local organizations]*

### NOTE

Under IHL, warring parties must not starve the civilian population. They must not attack or destroy objects that are essential for the survival of the civilian population.

Use "Affected by armed conflict – Colombia 2006" to focus students' attention on the variety of activities that must be carried out in response to the needs arising from armed conflict. Ask students to imagine the consequences for those living in Colombia in 2006.

### STUDENT 5A.3 RESOURCES

## The exploration

Ask students, working in their small groups, to brainstorm ideas for specific humanitarian activities in one of the humanitarian programme categories. Use examples from the teacher resource, if necessary, to help students get started.

**TEACHER**  
5A.1 RESOURCES

Reconvene the class to share ideas.

### Possible questions:

- > What difficulties might humanitarian organizations encounter in carrying out these activities? Why?  
*[For example: security problems; civilian population trapped in combat zones; difficulties in bringing relief convoys due to the lack of permission from local authorities or neighbouring countries; access denied to population in need because they are regarded as the enemy; overwhelming scale of the task when hundreds of thousands of people are displaced in a very short period of time; armed combatants mingling with civilians in need; bad roads; flooding during the rainy season; lack of funds]*
- > What precautions should be taken when planning and carrying out humanitarian activities?  
*[For example: contacting armed forces and groups to ensure that they consent to and support the planned actions; conducting detailed assessments to ensure that victims are served according to their needs; trying to determine who is at risk of being excluded from receiving aid and why, and taking measures to reduce this risk; planning to cover the most urgent needs first (checking the means available for cooking before bringing dry food, treating the water to avoid an epidemic); using local experts whenever possible]*
- > What can be done to avoid further consequences?  
*[For example: pointing out the consequences of not respecting IHL rules; reporting the situations of prisoners or civilians to the authorities and helping them find solutions; informing the victims of the services provided by humanitarian organizations and the way to benefit from them; helping military officers or leaders of armed groups to train combatants to respect IHL rules]*
- > What kinds of different skills are needed to carry out humanitarian action?  
*[For example: doctors, nurses, nutritionists, physiotherapists, social workers, agronomists, veterinarians, economists, engineers, trainers, logisticians, pilots, secretaries, office managers, truck drivers, mechanics, media experts, lawyers, interpreters, information technology specialists]*

### NOTE

IHL requires the warring parties to facilitate access to humanitarian relief for civilians in need. They must allow humanitarian workers the freedom of movement necessary for them to do their jobs.

*When the troops arrived, we left. We had been making tortillas when we left. We fled, leaving everything we owned in the house. When we returned, everything had been destroyed, we were dying of hunger.*  
 – a displaced woman, El Salvador

## The exploration

### 3. CLOSE – WHAT IS IT LIKE? (15 minutes)

Point out to students that though humanitarian workers have been the subject of much discussion in this exploration, humanitarian action is focused on the people whose lives have been torn apart by armed conflict.

Present the video *Forced from home*, in which Medin and Damir (two boys aged 12 and 13) tell what it was like to flee their homes and Saba (a 30-year-old mother of three) tells of her journey to a refugee camp.

**STUDENT**  
5A.4 RESOURCES

Discuss the ways in which war affected their lives and the needs created by it.

#### Possible questions:

- > How were the boys affected by the armed conflict?
- > What needs did they have?
- > What sorts of humanitarian activities could meet those needs?
- > What losses has Saba suffered?
- > How will life in the refugee camp be different from what she was used to?
- > What humanitarian activities could help her family?
- > How do you think people in the camp might be able to help each other?



#### KEY IDEAS

- Armed conflict destroys resources and disrupts the ordinary supports of life.
- The primary responsibility for restoring ordinary supports of life lies with governments, but humanitarian organizations, working together, assist in this task.

*Tam and his family set off in the afternoon. His wife and the two youngest children rode on one bicycle, three more children rode on the second bicycle, and Tam rode on the third, carrying a few bundles of clothing. The clothes and 700 piasters were all Tam took; he left his rice fields, his house, his furniture and his cooking utensils.*  
– Pulitzer-prize-winning journalist, Susan Sheehan

## Extension activities

### AN INVENTORY OF YOUR OWN ESSENTIAL NEEDS

Make a list of supports that are important in your life.

> What do you need in order to live in reasonable comfort?

Circle the items that you believe are absolutely essential to a normal life.

Put a check next to the ones that help to make you aware of your dignity.

> How would these needs be affected by war?

Compare lists with other students.

### THE EXPERIENCE OF FLEEING

More than other reasons that cause people to leave their homes (loss of shelter or possessions, absence of water or electricity, lack of jobs, etc.), the loss of security forces people to make quick decisions as they flee. People may flee their homes without knowing where they are going, how long they will be away or even whether they will ever return. This exercise is designed to help you understand the impact of flight on victims' lives.

In a small group, imagine the following situation.

- You are a family or group of neighbours.
- Your area is under devastating attack.
- You must leave now in order to save your lives.
- You do not know where you will be going and whether you will be able to return.
- You have only 10 minutes to prepare to leave.

Individually, write down what you want to take with you.

Then, as a group, decide what you can actually take, why it is necessary and how to carry it. Write down the group's plans.

Compare your group's plan with those of other groups.

> What did your group take and why?

> What thoughts or feelings did you have as you made these decisions?

> What difference would it make to your plan if your group included elderly people?

Infants or toddlers? People with disabilities? Sick or wounded people?

> How would the chaos of armed conflict affect your decisions?

*[In one class, a student said that he would go to a bank and take his money out. The teacher asked, 'Who would be working in the bank?']*



## Extension activities

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### PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED BY WAR TO FLEE THEIR HOMES

#### – PAST AND PRESENT

Exchange ideas with others about historical instances of refugees and other people who have been uprooted as a result of armed conflict.

*[For example, Moses, French Huguenots, James II of Scotland and his followers, Karl Marx, Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Hindus and Muslims in the Indian subcontinent in the 1940s, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Dalai Lama]*

Do research and write a report on a person or group of your choice.

- > Why did this person or group have to flee?
  - > In what ways are this person's or group's experiences like those of Saba or the Bosnian cousins? In what ways are they different?
  - > How was this person or group able to rebuild their lives? What was this person or group able to achieve afterwards?
- 

#### INTERVIEW

Find out if there are refugees or other people uprooted by war living in your community. Interview someone who was forced by circumstances to leave his or her home and move far away.

- > Who travelled with him or her?
- > What did this person leave behind that he or she misses most?
- > What losses did he or she suffer during the journey?
- > How has this person's life changed?

## ICRC activities in Colombia, 2006

*Please bear in mind that, during the same period, many humanitarian organizations besides the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) were working in Colombia and performing similar tasks.*

### FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- The ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross distributed food and essential household items to people who were forced to flee their homes as a result of the conflict. It focused on helping families during the first three months of their displacement, when they were most vulnerable and had not yet been connected with national support systems.
- The ICRC also provided aid to people affected by the conflict, with the aim of preventing their displacement. During periods of active conflict, movement is restricted and so is access to food, fuel and building materials. The ICRC stepped in on an ad hoc basis to provide assistance in these circumstances.
- The ICRC launched small-scale projects for farmers who had lost their assets, to help them to recover some of their independence and to reduce their dependence on external aid. For some, this included the provision of seeds and tools, and for others, the development of coffee-drying facilities.

### MEDICAL

- The ICRC supported health-care facilities. It also facilitated access to existing health-care services for people who had been forced by the armed conflict to leave their homes. Sometimes, it covered the costs of transportation and accommodation.
- To prevent outbreaks of diseases, immunization programmes for children under five were supported, sometimes by accompanying government health personnel to insecure areas where they were afraid to go without the ICRC's support. Reproductive health-care services were also a particular concern. Mobile health-care units were supported in areas prone to conflict to ensure that essential health-care was available for the sick and the wounded in these areas.
- The ICRC facilitated access to hospitals and physical rehabilitation centres for victims of mines and explosive remnants of war and others wounded in the armed conflict.
- Medical and psychological support was provided for victims of conflict-related sexual violence.

### COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- The ICRC improved urban health conditions by building and repairing latrines, wells and refuse containers in conflict-affected areas of the country. It also encouraged the government to assume greater responsibility for supporting the public on the proper use of latrines.
- The ICRC assisted in the reconstruction of school facilities and in ensuring proper water and sanitation facilities so that children affected by the conflict were able to continue their education.

## ICRC activities in Colombia, 2006

### PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS AND PRISONERS

- The ICRC continued to monitor the situation of the civilian population and to make representations to the government and armed groups regarding violations of international humanitarian law (IHL).
- It visited more than 7,000 detainees in 365 different places of detention throughout the country in 2006, took note of their problems and brought them up with the authorities in order to improve their situation and conditions of detention.
- The ICRC improved health conditions in several prisons by building or repairing water and sanitation facilities and by providing medicine and other supplies.
- In its role as neutral intermediary, the ICRC facilitated negotiations for the release of hostages held by different parties to the conflict.
- The organization also made recommendations to the government concerning the issue of people missing in connection with the conflict and helped the families of missing persons.

### RESTORING FAMILY LINKS

- The ICRC financed visits to prisoners by families who had to travel long distances and could not afford the costs. It gave released prisoners financial and logistic support for their return home.
- With the assistance of the Colombian Red Cross, Red Cross messages between family members separated as a result of the conflict and between prisoners and their families were collected and distributed.

### MINE ACTION

- The ICRC collated information on mine injuries collected in ICRC treatment centres. Information was shared with other agencies to help plan future mine-clearance activities.
- The ICRC and the Colombian Red Cross developed a broad and flexible approach to prevent accidents and to reduce the socio-economic impact of mines and explosive remnants of war. They extended their mine risk education activities in different parts of the country.

### RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE ICRC'S ACTION AND IHL

- With a view to instilling respect for IHL at all levels of society, the ICRC explained the rules of IHL at checkpoints, on military bases and in schools. The ICRC gave presentations about its work and the rules of IHL to a variety of audiences including the local authorities, people forced to leave their homes, students and commanders and fighters from both sides.
- A public campaign was conducted in Colombia to promote respect for the medical mission among arms carriers.
- Media contacts were maintained and press releases issued to inform the public about important humanitarian issues.

**Sources:** ICRC Annual Report and press releases from 2006.

# Affected by armed conflict – Colombia 2006

Day after day, thousands of Colombians suffer the severe humanitarian consequences of armed conflict.

People continue to flee from their homes, fearing for their lives. Violent clashes, the murder of members of their families, death threats, pressure to cooperate with one or the other warring party and restrictions on their ability to meet basic needs are some of the reasons driving people to seek safety in other parts of the country. Many leave their belongings and livelihoods behind them and move to areas surrounding cities. There, they may face social and economic marginalization.

Most of them will never be able to return to their homes again. In such circumstances, people may lose touch with their loved ones.

Civilians are routinely killed, taken hostage, forcibly 'disappeared' and subjected to various forms of abuse. Often the families of those who are killed do not have the means to give them a proper burial. Hostages may be held for long periods of time. The families of the 'disappeared' have to endure the pain of not knowing

what has become of their loved ones. Thousands of women are victims of sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

Children, especially in rural areas, are recruited by armed groups. Some become spies while others take part in violent clashes.

The number of victims of mines and explosive remnants of war remains high. Survivors face a long and difficult process of rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities.

A large number of people are held in prison in relation to the conflict. Some may not have contact with their families or be able to see them regularly.

People living in remote areas affected by the conflict often do not have access to medical services. Children are not vaccinated. Minor medical issues may turn into serious problems due to lack of access to medicine. Doctors, nurses and other medical personnel are kidnapped or attacked for doing their jobs. As a result, people cannot obtain the basic care they need.

The conflict has also taken its toll on the country's infrastructure.

Schools have been destroyed in some communities while in others they have never been built in the first place. There are few hospitals and other medical facilities. Some communities do not have adequate water collection and transport systems, plumbing or waste disposal systems. Many farmers do not have access to machines that would increase their productivity.

Source: International Committee of the Red Cross, Annual Report 2006; Colombia.

Question: What humanitarian action has to be taken?	
Humanitarian programmes	Proposed humanitarian actions
Food and agriculture	
Medical	
Community infrastructure projects	
Protection of civilians and prisoners	
Restoring family links	
Mine action	
Raising awareness	

## Video transcript

### Forced from home

War disrupts civilian life. Many people are displaced.	Narrator: During the war in ex-Yugoslavia, millions of people had to flee and take refuge wherever they could. Like so many who left, Damir and Medin believed that they would never see their homes again.	<b>Saba's story</b> Saba: My name is Saba. I am 30 years old. I have walked 50 kilometres from our village. I have come with my children. In our village we were farmers, but the rain didn't come, and the crops didn't grow. My husband isn't with us. I only have my children now. And I miss him. I don't know where he is. Some people tell me he's gone far away to trade incense. But I don't think it's true. Soldiers took him away. I haven't heard of him since that day. Maybe he is dead. I don't know. We just wait here, but I don't know what we are waiting for. The nights follow the day just as they did in our village, but the days are different and in the night I cry.
<b>Damir's and Medin's story</b> Narrator: Damir and his cousin Medin used to be refugees, but they have recently returned to their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Damir: It was hard. I cried because I was leaving my home. Medin: We got on a bus and went to the first place. When we arrived there, we were hungry. We had nothing to eat because all our food was left behind. People told us to go to the next town. When we arrived there, they said there was no place for us.	Damir: I thought we would never return here, because they told us to be ready in two hours and that a bus would be waiting for us. Medin: I brought some things when we left – I took the radio, photos and some blankets so we'd be covered when we went to bed. I think the worst thing is when the other children start teasing you and call you 'refugee' and when you go to school they start shouting 'Look! Here comes the refugee.'	

# Exploration 5B: Planning a camp for people displaced by war

## 5B

In Exploration 5B, students plan a camp for people who have been displaced by war. This activity enables them to grasp the scale of the effort required to restore ordinary supports of life in such circumstances.

Students take on the role of humanitarian workers, estimating needs, allotting tasks and making plans for getting supplies.

### OBJECTIVES

- to think about the circumstances in which people forced to leave their homes might find themselves
- to learn about some of the aspects of assistance and protection that people need when armed conflict forces them to flee their homes
- to be aware of the scale of the effort required to meet human needs arising from displacement caused by armed conflict



### STUDENT RESOURCES

- 5B.1 Photo collage 5B (see separate sheet)
- 5B.2 Planning a camp – a report
- 5B.3 Information and instructions for camp planners
- 5B.4 Worksheet: Planning report

### PREPARATION

Plan how to use “Information and instructions for camp planners” and the “Planning report” worksheet with small groups.

In the *Methodology Guide*, review teaching methods 1 (Discussion), 2 (Brainstorming), 6 (Using stories, photos and videos), 9 (Small groups) and 10 (Gathering stories and news).

### TIME

Two 45-minute sessions

## The exploration

### 1. NEEDS OF PEOPLE FORCED TO FLEE AS A RESULT OF ARMED CONFLICT

(15 minutes)

Ask students to suggest different options for where refugees and other displaced persons might go.

*[For example: establishing a spontaneous settlement, moving in with a host family, seeking refuge in a camp for displaced persons]*

Focus the discussion on people who have sought refuge in a camp for displaced persons.

#### Possible questions:

- > Why do you think people would choose to seek refuge in a camp over other possibilities?
- > Does everyone who flees want to go to a camp?

Have students brainstorm about the particular needs of people who have sought refuge in a camp.

The following categories may be used to organize students' responses:

- water collection and drainage;
- food;
- shelter;
- medical care;
- energy (including cooking, heating, lighting);
- hygiene and sanitary facilities;
- family reunification;
- security;
- psycho-social support;
- communication.

*'Refugees' are people who have fled their country for fear of being persecuted because of their race, ethnicity, religion, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. This includes people fleeing an armed conflict, generalized violence or massive violations of human rights.*

*People who are forced to leave their homes for similar reasons but who remain in their own countries are known as 'internally displaced persons.'*  
– UNHCR

#### NOTE

Responses may also be organized using the categories of biological, social, psychological or spiritual needs.

Present "Photo collage 5B," and discuss the needs of the people in the photos.

#### STUDENT 5B.1 RESOURCES

#### Possible questions:

- > What do you think are the needs of the people in these photos?
- > Who do you think is/ should be responsible for helping these people?
- > What should humanitarian workers take into consideration in meeting the needs in a camp for displaced persons?

*At the end of 2006, there were an estimated 9.9 million refugees and 24.5 million war-affected internally displaced persons in the world. Many others had fled their homes, becoming migrants, for a range of reasons including poverty and lack of local opportunities.*  
– UNHCR, 2006  
Global Trends

# The exploration

## 2. PLANNING A CAMP (15 minutes)

Distribute “Planning a camp - a report” to students, and ask them to describe how planners responded to some of the needs that they identified in step 1 as well as those described in the handout.

**STUDENT**  
5B.2 **RESOURCES**

Divide the class into small groups. Instruct half of the groups to list specific ideas about what is involved in setting up a camp for displaced persons.

*[For example: site selection and layout, ensuring access and warehousing, acquiring building materials and equipment, organizing the main services or responding to environmental concerns]*

Instruct the other half of the groups to list specific ideas about the main services that should be provided to meet the basic needs of displaced persons in a camp.

*[For example: water supply and drainage, shelter, food supply, collection and disposal of refuse and human waste, medical facilities, lighting and energy, internal security and communication]*

## 3. CALCULATE RESOURCES FOR A CAMP (40 minutes)

Distribute “Information and instructions for camp planners” to the groups, and ask them to read the information in the box.

**STUDENT**  
5B.3 **RESOURCES**

Ask each group to develop a plan for meeting a specific category of need of in this camp (e.g. food, water, shelter). Each group should calculate the quantities of supplies needed and think about how to obtain and distribute them to people in the camp, taking into account the stipulations of six months and 10,000 people. Distribute the worksheet “Planning report” for students to record their ideas.

**STUDENT**  
5B.4 **RESOURCES**

After about ten minutes, have each group present its plan for class discussion.

The presentations should include:

- the category of need addressed;
- the quantity of supplies and services needed;
- a plan for acquiring supplies/services;
- a plan for distributing the supplies/services fairly and efficiently;
- specific plans for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable groups (e.g. unaccompanied children, women and girls, pregnant and nursing mothers, disabled persons, the elderly, etc.) and for identifying the skills, strengths and resources of the displaced community that might be of help in meeting their needs.

Broaden the discussion to cover the scale of the effort and the resources needed to establish camps of a much larger size. Have students give examples of such camps from around the world.

### Possible question:

- > How would your plan need to be changed if the camp had to meet the needs of 300,000 people?

*We ran away with babies on our shoulders and children on our arms and the elderly stumbling behind us. Over the fields, through the bush, on into the swamp. We all feared for our lives. The soldiers had already been to the neighbouring villages and simply abducted women who never reappeared.*  
– a 60-year-old displaced woman, Nigeria



## The exploration

### 4. HOW TO PROTECT HUMAN DIGNITY AND ENSURE IDENTITY (10 minutes)

Discuss the needs other than biological that humanitarian workers must consider while helping displaced persons to recover, to assume responsibility for themselves and to preserve their human dignity.

#### Possible questions:

- > What social, psychological and spiritual needs must be addressed?  
[For example: education, information, recreation, religious and cultural practices]
- > If you found yourself living in a camp, what could you do to continue feeling like the same person you were before?
- > Why do you think nearly 80% of all displaced persons are women and children?
- > What risks might women, children and the elderly face in a camp for displaced persons?
- > How can these risks be avoided?
- > In what ways might living in a camp undermine people's human dignity, confidence and ability to look after themselves? How can these elements be overcome?

*For refugee and displaced children, boredom and absence of education (...) is a dangerous combination. It produces unstructured days where traumatizing memories linger, fears thrive, and violence is always possible. (...) Girls may be threatened with rape and boys with recruitment into gangs. Adolescents may get pregnant at a very early age. The lives of children, in short, start to fall apart very quickly...*  
– Marc Sommers, Emergency Education for Children

### 5. CLOSE – NEEDS AFTER LEAVING THE CAMP (10 minutes)

Give students a few minutes to write down what they think people will need after they leave the camp.

Divide them into four groups, and have each group focus on one of the following categories of people in the camp:

- children under five;
- young people;
- adults;
- the elderly.

Then discuss the needs they mention and the reasons they give.

#### Possible questions:

- > What differences are there in the needs of children and the needs of adults?
- > Who might need particular attention? Why?  
[For example: those who have experienced physical or psychological trauma may need long-term counselling and medical services, those separated from family members will need help to find them]
- > What do you think ordinary individuals can do for refugees and other displaced persons?  
[For example: help refugees and other displaced people who come into their community to feel welcome, help them to find jobs, contribute to the funding of humanitarian organizations, let their politicians know that they want their country to help refugees and other displaced persons]

*It was hot at the border. I could feel the burning rocks through the soles of my sandals. But the children that I watched leave were barefooted. They'd been walking for three days, climbing our Afghan mountains. They were just small kids. They reminded me of chicks. They looked dazed.*  
– a resistance fighter

*The disintegration of families in times of war leaves women and girls especially vulnerable to violence. Nearly 80% of the (...) people uprooted by wars today are women and children. When fathers, husbands, brothers and sons are drawn away to fight, they leave women, the very young and the elderly to fend for themselves. (...) Refugee families cite rape or the fear of rape as a key factor in their decisions to seek refuge.*  
– UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 1996

## The exploration

### **!** KEY IDEAS

- Responding to the needs of people uprooted as a result of armed conflict requires a great deal of planning and effort and ample resources.
- In addition to their immediate biological needs, the social, psychological and spiritual needs of displaced persons must also be addressed to enable them to regain their human dignity and independence as quickly as possible.
- Assistance should be provided in a manner that aims to minimise any unintended harm it may cause.

*In 2006, 734,000 refugees voluntarily returned to their homes, some 30,000 were resettled in another country and a small number integrated into the local community to which they had originally fled.*  
– UNHCR, 2006 Global Trends

## Extension activities

### HELPING CLOSE TO HOME

If you have located a community of refugees or other displaced persons, find out what some of their needs are (e.g. food, clothing, trauma counselling, language tutoring, reading). Organize an effort by your class to meet some of those needs. What are the beneficial aspects of your assistance? What might be some of the negative implications?

### COOPERATION AMONG HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Over the years there has been increasing acceptance of the interrelation between emergency and development activities, leading to a broader approach towards humanitarian assistance. Do research on the work of humanitarian organizations – where they are working, what they are doing, how they coordinate their work with other organizations. Possible avenues of research include:

- writing to humanitarian organizations for information;
- using the Internet;
- making use of library resources;
- examining news media reports and magazine articles.

*To carry out its operations in 2006, the ICRC operated 3,500 trucks and other vehicles, two vessels, 300 warehouses and over 15 aircraft.*  
– ICRC, Annual Report 2006

#### MAIN ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

##### United Nations:

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
(<http://www.unhcr.org>)

United Nations World Food Programme  
(<http://www.wfp.org>)

United Nations Development Programme  
(<http://www.undp.org>)

United Nations Children's Fund  
(<http://www.unicef.org>)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
(<http://ochaonline.un.org>)

International Organization for Migration  
(<http://www.iom.int>)

##### International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:

International Committee of the Red Cross  
(<http://www.icrc.org>)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
(<http://www.ifrc.org>)

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement  
(<http://www.redcross.int>)

## Extension activities

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### International non-governmental organizations:

Care

(<http://www.care.org>)

Danish Refugee Council

(<http://www.drc.dk>)

Doctors Without Borders/*Médecins Sans Frontières*

(<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org>)

Handicap International

(<http://www.handicap-international.org>)

International Rescue Committee

(<http://www.theirc.org>)

Norwegian Refugee Council

(<http://www.nrc.no>)

Oxfam

(<http://www.oxfam.org>)

Save the Children

(<http://www.savethechildren.com>)

World Concern

(<http://www.worldconcern.org>)

World Vision

(<http://www.worldvision.org>)

### Human rights and advocacy organizations:

Amnesty International

(<http://www.amnesty.org>)

Human Rights Watch

(<http://www.hrw.org>)

Refugees International

(<http://www.refugeesinternational.org>)

Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights

(<http://www.yucom.org.yu/EnglishVersion/LawyersCommittee.asp>)

# Planning a camp – a report

When the Gulf Crisis broke out at the beginning of August 1990, hundreds of thousands of foreign workers from Egypt, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Thailand fled Kuwait and Iraq. The arrival of large numbers of cars, buses and trucks created a huge traffic jam on the Jordanian border. Entire families sat waiting, not knowing what the next day would bring. Tens of thousands of people suddenly found themselves stranded in the desert on the border between Iraq and Jordan without food or water.

## An immediate response

The authorities had to organize temporary shelters for them in the no-man's-land between Iraq and

Jordan. The Jordanian Red Crescent and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) immediately launched an emergency assistance operation to provide drinking water, shelter and medical care. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also joined in the effort to meet the vast needs arising from the situation.

An emergency first-aid post was set up. Serious cases were evacuated to the hospital in Ruweished. The area was soon overcrowded. During the day, temperatures rose as high as 50 degrees centigrade. There was no shade from the scorching sun and water was becoming scarce.

Water is the most urgent need in such circumstances. People waited



Roland Sidler/ICRC

in line for hours to try and get just a few litres of drinking water for their families, and fights would break out when distributions of bottled water were not properly organized. Food was also running out.

Only 30% of the displaced people had proper shelter. Others found makeshift means of protecting themselves from the sun. But many more had nothing. Strong winds and swirling dust only made conditions worse.

The area was clearly not suitable for setting up a proper camp. Water tankers had to make 40 trips a day to the camp from a borehole 35 kilometres away. Each time, the water was pumped into collapsible tanks and then piped to taps, where



Michel Schroeder/ICRC

people queued up to draw the water they needed. Several rows of pipes had to be set up to avoid long waits in the hot sun.

## An alternative solution had to be found

The engineers realized that a more suitable site had to be found. The Jordanian authorities agreed to allow a camp for 30,000 displaced persons to be built near Azraq.

Most of the equipment needed to build the new camp was airlifted to Amman. The supplies were sorted out at Amman airport and then loaded on trucks. Preparations were made for setting up the tents and special teams were trained for this purpose.



Roland Sidler/ICRC



# Planning a camp – a report

A camp planner described their work.

Our main difficulty in setting up this camp was the very short time we had to complete the job.

First we had to choose the site. We had to find the right slope and make sure that the wind would blow the smell from the latrines away from the camp.

Then we had to install a water supply system. We ran a two-kilometre pipe off the major road. The water, which comes from the Jordanian mains, is then stored in large tanks we set up. The water flows downhill from the tanks (which can hold 390,000 litres) to 30 distribution points. We are also laying drains – hence the importance

of building the camp on a slight slope so that waste water can flow into the large soak-away pits that we will dig downhill from the site.

The camp should accommodate 30,000 people and has been divided into sectors. Every sector is made up of a number of squares, each providing shelter for 500 people. We have dirt roads around each of the squares so that vehicles can drive in to remove rubbish, deal with any technical problems and bring food to the distribution points. Latrines have been dug for the camp population, and we are installing electric lighting so they can be used at night.

**Source:** ICRC, *Setting up a refugee camp*, Geneva, 1991.



Roland Sidler/ICRC



Michel Schroeder/ICRC

## SETTING UP A CAMP INVOLVES:

- Site selection and layout
- Ensuring access and warehousing
- Acquiring building material and equipment
- Organizing the main services

## MAIN SERVICES ARE:

- Water supply and drainage
- Shelter
- Food supply
- Refuse and human waste disposal
- Medical facilities
- Lighting and energy
- Internal security
- Communication

# Information and instructions for camp planners

**Refugee population to come to this camp:** 10,000 (3,000 women, 1,000 men, 5,000 young people, and 1,000 children under five)

- Unaccompanied children: 2,000
- Pregnant and nursing women: 800
- Sick and wounded: 1,000
- Widows or women whose husbands are missing: 2,000
- Disabled: 500
- Elderly: 2,000

**Camp location:** a hilly, open field, 200 kilometres from the nearest city

**Time of year:** autumn

**Length of time to assist this population:** six months

## FOOD

Consider that every adult needs the equivalent of 2,250 calories and a standard ration of almost 0.6 kg per day. This can be broken down into:

- 500 grams of wheat
- 30 grams of edible oil
- 30 grams of powdered milk
- 20 grams of sugar
- 3 grams of tea

- > How much food is needed?
- > How will you acquire it?
- > How will you distribute it?
- > Will it be necessary to cook? If so, how will it be done? What kinds of equipment will be required?
- > List the various types of food you will provide.
- > What will you do if you have people with special dietary restrictions (due to disease, malnutrition, religious or cultural practices, etc.)?

Recall the food distribution you saw in the video *Forced from home* and in some of the photos. Think about all of the planning that was necessary.

## SANITATION

Since poor sanitation can lead to medical/health problems, your plans should consider how to prevent disease.

- > How many latrines need to be constructed?
- > Where will they be located?
- > What tools and materials will be needed to construct them (e.g. wood, branches, zinc)?
- > What are your plans for cleaning and maintaining them?
- > How will solid waste be disposed of?
- > Where will people wash?

## MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND TREATMENT

Expect 100 patient consultations per day.

- > How many sick, wounded or elderly people and pregnant women are in the camp?
- > What kinds of medical supplies will be needed?
- > Calculate the quantity of medical supplies needed.
- > What medical personnel are needed?
- > What procedures need to be set up?

## WATER

Count on average 20 litres of water/day for an adult. (3 litres/day = only drinking water for survival)

- > How much water will be needed?
- > Does the drinking water have to be treated?
- > How will water be obtained for the population?
- > How will water be provided?

# Information and instructions for camp planners

## CLOTHING

Clothing should be appropriate for weather conditions and take into account cultural and religious practices.

- > What types of clothing are required?
- > If there are infants in the camp, how many diapers or substitutes are needed?
- > Is bedding needed? What can be used?
- > How will people wash their clothes?

## SHELTER

Ideally, each person should have 30 square metres of space. When circumstances do not allow this, the amount of space allotted to each person can be reduced to 10 square metres. In very difficult situations, such as in mountainous or urban areas, it can be reduced to three square metres per person.

- > Calculate the total space that you will require.
- > If a tent measures 150 square metres, how many tents will be needed?
- > What effect will the weather have on your plans for shelter?

## FUEL

Fuel is necessary for such things as cooking, heating, lighting and running a generator.

- > What fuel needs do you estimate your camp will have?
- > What fuel will be used? How will it be supplied?
- > What are some dangers that need to be avoided? What precautions do you plan?

*There are currently 10 million refugees and some 24 million people who are displaced within their own countries as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence or massive violations of human rights.*  
– UNHCR, July 2007



Worksheet

Planning report

Category of need:			
Supplies/services needed:	Quantity:	Plan for acquiring them:	
		Plan for distributing them:	
Special plans for certain vulnerable groups:			
Pregnant women:			
Children:			
Disabled persons:			
Elderly:			
Other:			

## Exploration 5C: Focus on protecting prisoners

One consequence of armed conflict is the taking and holding of prisoners. In Exploration 5C, students study the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL) that are specifically intended to protect prisoners. They learn about one of the tasks performed by the

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): visiting prisoners in order to assess the extent to which their captors are complying with these IHL rules. Students also explore the dilemmas that such prison visits can create for humanitarian workers.

### OBJECTIVES

- to learn about some of the ways in which IHL protects the lives and human dignity of prisoners
- to understand some of the dilemmas that humanitarian workers face while protecting prisoners



### TEACHER RESOURCES

5C.1 ICRC prison visits



### STUDENT RESOURCES

- 5C.2 Basic protections for prisoners
- 5C.3 Video and transcript: *Light in the darkness* (5'20) DVD
- 5C.4 Using confidentiality as a working method
- 5C.5 Dilemma scenario: How can I protect these prisoners?
- 5C.6 Video and transcript: *A prisoner remembers* (2'10) DVD
- 5C.7 Registration card
- 5C.8 Red Cross message form
- 5C.9 Through the eyes of prisoners

### PREPARATION

In the *Methodology Guide*, review teaching methods 1 (Discussion), 2 (Brainstorming), 4 (Using dilemmas), 6 (Using stories, photos and videos), 7 (Writing and reflecting) and 9 (Small groups).

### TIME

Two 45-minute sessions

## The exploration

### 1. WHY PRISONERS NEED PROTECTION (15 minutes)

Ask students to respond to the following questions:

- > Why might a person who has been detained in relation to an armed conflict be specifically at risk?  
*[For example: the suspicion that he or she holds vital information, the suspicion that he or she is the enemy, the captors' attitude that the enemy doesn't deserve to be treated humanely]*
- > What other reasons might put prisoners at risk in times of armed conflict?  
*[For example: chaos and lack of control over those in charge of the prisoners, insufficient means for properly accommodating prisoners]*

Then have students work in small groups or in pairs to make a list of their responses to the following question:

- > What dangers and difficulties might prisoners face in captivity?

Reconvene the class and compile a list of their ideas.

*[For example: disappearing without trace; summary execution; being tortured during interrogation or being forced to sign a confession; insufficient food, water, clothing, shelter, sanitary facilities; lack of access to fresh air; inadequate access to medical care; being without family news (the family might not even know that the prisoner is alive); subjection to propaganda and to the pressure to collaborate; difficulties with other detainees; the trauma of being held captive; uncertainty over the fate of one's family]*

On the basis of the problems students list, ask the small groups or pairs to think about what must be done to protect the well-being and human dignity of people detained in relation to an armed conflict. Have them write down suggestions for specific rules. Remind them that women and children may be imprisoned, and ask them whether they would propose special protections for them.

Discuss the ideas students propose.

#### Possible question:

- > Do your rules cover all the risks identified by the class?

#### NOTE

In this exploration, the terms 'prisoner' and 'detainee' refer to a person, whether combatant or civilian, who is detained in relation to an armed conflict.

### 2. HOW IHL PROTECTS PRISONERS (15 minutes)

Present "Basic protections for prisoners," and have students compare their suggestions with the protections that IHL provides.



#### Possible questions:

- > Were you surprised by any of the provisions on this list? If so, why?
- > Which protections, if any, might be hard for captors to provide? Why?
- > What can be done to ensure that prisoners get the required protections?

## The exploration

As students brainstorm ideas, you can group them under the following main headings:

### Ways to ensure respect for the lives and human dignity of prisoners

#### 1. Captors' responsibilities

The law requires that those in charge of prisons receive training on the rights of prisoners and the rules that they must follow. Such instruction must be monitored. Should any abuse be identified later, it must be stopped and remedied, and those responsible must be penalized. Authorities must also provide prisons with adequate funds and other necessary resources.

#### 2. Visits to prisoners

IHL provides for neutral humanitarian organizations such as the ICRC to visit prisoners in the camps and prisons in which they are held and monitor their treatment. Those in charge of such places must cooperate with the ICRC and must ensure that it can apply its working methods. After visiting prisoners, the ICRC shares its findings confidentially with the pertinent authorities, as well as any recommendations it thinks appropriate.

#### 3. Prosecution by courts

One of the aims of bringing people to trial for committing violations of IHL or human rights law is to deter others by showing them that certain acts will not go unpunished.

### 3. ICRC VISITS TO PRISONERS (15 minutes)

Introduce the video *Light in the darkness*, in which students will hear the voices of actual prisoners and see ICRC delegates making their prison visits.

Before viewing the video, instruct half of the class to look for and make notes on what ICRC delegates do while visiting prisoners. Instruct the other half of the class to look for and make notes on how an ICRC prison visit helps prisoners.

**TEACHER**  
5C.1 RESOURCES

**STUDENT**  
5C.3 RESOURCES

Ask students to report on what they learned from the video.

#### Possible questions:

- > How does what you saw relate to the rules you proposed? To the protections under IHL?
- > What skills do you think are needed to conduct prison visits?

*In 2006, the ICRC visited 478,299 detainees in 2,577 places of detention in 71 countries around the world.*

#### NOTE

If you are unable to show the video, students can look for ideas in the pictures as well as in prisoners' testimonies in the transcript.

## The exploration

### 4. USING CONFIDENTIALITY AS A WORKING METHOD (10 minutes)

Have students write down what they think it means to keep information confidential. Then ask a few to explain the meaning of the word 'confidentiality.'

Have students read "Using confidentiality as a working method," and then generate a discussion comparing this method with public protests.



#### Possible questions:

> How might confidentiality help prisoners? And public protests?

### 5. A DILEMMA FACED BY A PRISON DELEGATE (15 minutes)

Present the dilemma faced by an ICRC delegate in "How can I protect these prisoners?"



Divide the class into small groups. Instruct half of them to examine the option of speaking to the prison director about the ill-treatment.

#### Possible questions for these groups:

- > What are the advantages and risks for the prisoners of this course of action?
- > What can you do to prevent the prison director or guards from retaliating against the prisoners?  
[For example, remind the director that delegates will revisit the prisoners to make sure nothing has happened to them; refer to the ill-treatment in general terms, without singling out individuals or a group of detainees]

Instruct the other small groups to examine the option of not mentioning the ill-treatment to the director.

#### Possible questions for these groups:

- > What are the advantages and risks for the prisoners of this course of action?
- > What can you do nevertheless to help the prisoners?  
[For example, wait until the prisoners have been transferred to another prison before raising the issue of ill-treatment; have a talk with high-ranking officials and report what you have heard without naming the prison]

Then conduct a class discussion on each course of action.

Have students write down what they would choose to do and why.

Discuss their choices. Point out that this kind of decision depends on:

- > the actual circumstances;
- > the delegates being able to visit the prisoners on a regular basis;
- > the prisoners' best interest.

Since the end of 2001 (the fall of the Taliban regime), the ICRC has played a unique role in Afghanistan in protecting prisoners; its delegates visited 43,483 prisoners and registered their names, and it has been instrumental in passing about 120,780 Red Cross messages, most of them between prisoners and their families.

## The exploration

### 6. CLOSE (10 minutes)

Present the video *A prisoner remembers*. Then ask students for their thoughts.



#### Possible questions:

- > What feelings do this prisoner's memories evoke?
- > Are you surprised that the door was opened? Why do you think the prison authorities decided to open it?

Return to the list in "Basic protections for prisoners."



#### Possible questions:

- > How does what have you learned about protecting prisoners relate to his situation?
- > Are there any other protections you would add to this list? Why?

#### KEY IDEAS

- The lives and human dignity of people who have been detained in relation to armed conflict are at risk.
- IHL protects prisoners; it also ensures that they are visited by humanitarian workers to verify that the rules governing their treatment are complied with.
- Humanitarian workers might encounter difficult dilemmas while carrying out their task of visiting prisoners.

## Extension activities

### DOCUMENTS: WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM THEM?

#### Registration card:

Examine the ICRC "Registration card" used to register prisoners.

- > Why does the form ask for each piece of information?
- > Who will use the information? When? And why?

 **STUDENT**  
5C.7 **RESOURCES**

#### Red Cross message form:

After filling out the "Red Cross message form" as a prisoner might, have someone reply to your message using the REPLY portion of the form.

 **STUDENT**  
5C.8 **RESOURCES**

OR

Fill out the Red Cross message form as a prisoner might.

Then write a story that begins with someone receiving that message and ends with a description of its effect on three different people that day.

*This small piece of paper has unbelievable power because it is the bridge between those who suffer because of war and their loved ones somewhere else who are also suffering because they have no idea what is happening to their family members.*  
– Red Cross tracing delegate

### ART PROJECT

It is hard for the ICRC to assess the true impact of its visits to people deprived of their freedom; it is also difficult to say how things might have turned out if the ICRC had been unable to operate in a particular situation.

Read the following statement. Give Nelson Mandela's words artistic expression in a form of your choice.

*What matters is not only the good the ICRC brings, but even more the bad it prevents.*

– Nelson Mandela (Registration No. 220/82, Robben Island Prison, 1962-1990)

### WHAT DIFFICULTIES MIGHT A PRISONER FACE AFTER BEING RELEASED?

Using material from "Through the eyes of prisoners," write a scene for a play about life after release from prison. The central figure in your scene must be someone who was imprisoned for several years in relation to an armed conflict. Make a dramatic production of your scene.

 **STUDENT**  
5C.9 **RESOURCES**

## Extension activities

### CARRYING OUT A PRISON VISIT

Consider the following advice, which might be given to someone who is going to conduct a prison visit.

As you tour the prison, before having private conversations with prisoners:

1. Think about your introductory speech to them.
2. Watch for:
  - The general state of infrastructure (for instance, kitchens, infirmary, toilets and showers, and dormitories).
  - Signs of discrimination regarding access to basic needs (such as food, water and bedding) and treatment (health services, physical exercise, recreational activities).
  - Signs of ill-treatment.
3. Remember: the fact that you have seen the whole prison doesn't mean that you understand everything.

> What explanations can you think of for each piece of advice?



## ICRC prison visits

### HOW AN ICRC PRISON VISIT IS CARRIED OUT:

- Initial talk with the director to hear his or her point of view, organize the visit and discuss the actions taken by the authorities to implement International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) recommendations made during the previous visit. The initial talk is also used to make sure that the ICRC will be able carry out the visit in accordance with its working procedure (checking the register, inspecting all parts of the prison, holding private conversations with prisoners, registering the prisoners, discussing the findings with the authorities during the final talk).
- Tour of premises (especially cells, toilets, showers, exercise yard, kitchen, solitary confinement cells, infirmary).
- General talk with groups of prisoners to discuss living conditions: access to water, food, shower and toilets; access to medical care, physical exercise, fresh air and recreational activities.
- Private conversations with prisoners to discuss sensitive issues such as treatment during detention and interrogation; access to facilities (water, food, fresh air, etc); behaviour of the guards; treatment of other prisoners; hidden or inaccessible detainees; abuse by other prisoners; contact with family; and medical or personal problems.
- Final talk with the director to present the ICRC's findings and recommendations for improvement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS COMMONLY MADE TO THE AUTHORITIES:

- ensure that all detainees have equal access to all facilities and essential supplies;
- increase access to fresh air to at least two hours a day;
- provide prisoners with a balanced diet and at least two meals a day;
- increase the supply of and access to clean water;
- improve access to medical care;
- repeat instructions to guards to treat prisoners with respect and investigate and take action against allegations of abuse.

### HOW ICRC VISITS CAN HELP A PRISONER:

- Registration and keeping track of the prisoner is a safeguard against 'disappearance' or summary execution.
- Private conversations with delegates allow the prisoner to discuss a number of matters freely: his or her fears and personal needs as well as treatment during detention, including the experience of being tortured. Private conversations can help to ease a prisoner's psychological burden and, in some cases, to dissipate his or her fears about the potential medical consequences of torture.
- Prisoners can send Red Cross messages to their families, to inform them of their whereabouts and to keep in touch, and can also receive replies. On occasion, the ICRC facilitates family visits to prisoners.
- Private conversations with detainees enable delegates to form a more precise picture of their treatment. On the basis of information gathered through private conversations with prisoners and from their own direct observations, ICRC delegates make recommendations for improvements to the authorities.
- When necessary, the ICRC can also provide direct assistance, in the form of bedding, food, medicine, hygiene and leisure items, and by repairing water and sanitation facilities.

# Basic protections for prisoners

(who are detained in relation to an armed conflict)

## PROHIBITED:

- murder
- cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment
- sexual violence
- slave labour

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- adequate food and water
- adequate medical care
- safe and adequate housing
- adequate clothing and bedding
- security of personal belongings
- registration of personal details
- family contact
- access to the ICRC
- respect for religious and cultural practices
- adequate sanitary facilities for personal hygiene
- access to physical exercise
- no conviction except after fair trial
- prisoners' right to file complaints regarding their detention, reviewed by an independent body
- an independent body to monitor compliance with the rules

## SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR WOMEN:

- separate accommodation from that of men (unless with their families), under immediate supervision of women
- may be searched only by women
- must be especially protected against sexual violence

## SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN:

- separate accommodation from that of adults, unless with their families
- food, hygiene and medical care suited to their age
- opportunity to continue schooling

## Video transcript

### Light in the darkness



ICRC

#### **Voice 1 – Man**

*For the first time, people came from the outside to visit us. I vaguely knew that there was some sort of organization in Geneva that helped poor, oppressed people, but that's all. I didn't know that they would be able to get into our prison.*

#### **Voice 2 – Man**

*They looked everywhere, not just where the prison authorities wanted them to look. They obviously wanted the whole picture, and that won our confidence.*

#### **Voice 1 – Man**

*They were effective and discreet. They had the trust of both sides: the authorities gave them access to places where others never went, and the prisoners saw them as, as the saying goes, a 'light in the darkness.' During the entire six months that we were in*



ICRC

*prison, we had Red Cross visits. They never let us down. They came twice a week, sometimes more. They took down our names and made lists. There were always new arrivals in the prison, and we always did what we could to have their names entered onto the list as soon as possible, because that list provided an enormous protection.*

#### **Voice 3 – Man**

*If I'm alive today, it's only because I was able to give my name to a Red Cross representative.*

#### **Voice 4 – ICRC Delegate**

*You can explain this to him? (...) This one is for you and this one is for your relatives.*



ICRC

#### **Voice 5 – Man**

*I'll never forget that moment. That delegate inspired confidence and made me feel free to speak. He asked me a lot of questions about myself, about my situation, about my family. He didn't take a position one way or another; he just listened.*

#### **Voice 1 - Man**

*We were in prison and we were suffering. We would have liked the Red Cross to tell the international press about it. We would really have appreciated that. But when you think about it, doing that – revealing all that they'd seen – might have provoked the authorities into banning them from the prisons. If that had happened, we would have been the losers.*

**Source:** *Remembering the silence*, ICRC, Geneva, 1993.

# Using confidentiality as a working method

By 2001, delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had been visiting prisons in Nepal for two years; they had met over 600 detainees, most of them with links to various Maoist movements. When asked about detention conditions and whether delegates had seen any signs of torture, the head of the ICRC delegation in Nepal refused to comment, saying:

*It would violate the ICRC's working method of confidentiality. We cannot reveal this to the press but we have informed the government officials of what we saw during such jail visits.*

When asked whether the delegates had information concerning more than 60 missing rebels, whose whereabouts the Maoists had been repeatedly urging the government to make public, he said the ICRC "probably has the information" but that he could not share it with the press.

**Source:** *Kathmandu Post* via Nepalnews.com website, 23 March 2001.

Some human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and certain local organizations, make public what they learn about the conditions that prevail in prisons or about the abuse suffered by prisoners. This may help to put pressure on those fighting to respect international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law. However, such public statements may also result in human rights organizations being denied the direct access to prisoners, or to those in charge of prisons, that is needed to improve detention conditions.

## Dilemma scenario

### How can I protect these prisoners?

You are a delegate from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and you are visiting a prison.

You have just finished having private conversations with seven prisoners. Three of them told you that two weeks ago they had been badly beaten during interrogation by a prison officer. The prisoners had then signed forced confessions, admitting crimes against the government. They are very afraid and say that if the prison director hears that they have spoken to you about their treatment during interrogation, they will be punished and beaten again.

You now have a talk with the director of the prison.

**Source:** Developed from ICRC delegates' reports.

**Question: What do you decide to do?**

#### POSSIBLE POINTS OF VIEW TO CONSIDER:

- a prisoner who was tortured
- the prison director
- other prisoners
- a prisoner's relative
- the delegate's supervisor

## Video transcript

# A prisoner remembers

### Male Voice

*I was a political detainee for one-and-a-half months. During my stay in prison, I was given nothing to drink and nothing to eat. To survive, I had to drink my own urine, so that I wouldn't die of dehydration.*

*When this happens to you, there's nothing to prevent you from 'disappearing' or from simply being done away with. Sometimes we would hear people screaming, then a burst of machine-gun fire, then silence.*

*I heard someone knocking on the doors of other cells and I thought to myself, 'We have a visitor.' Instinctively, I began knocking on the inside of the cell door.*



*I heard a group of people stop in front of my door and a voice said, 'There seems to be someone in here.' Somebody else said, 'No, there's nobody.' But the other insisted, 'Please open it.'*

*There followed a discussion that seemed to me to last forever until finally the door opened and, for the first time in a very long time, I saw light and a human face. And I heard, 'Hello, I'm a delegate from the Red Cross.'*

*That first visit did have direct consequences. Not long afterwards, I was given a little can of filthy water. Well, at least it was something to drink. And they immediately stopped threatening to kill us.*

**Source:** *Remembering the silence*, ICRC, Geneva, 1993.

# Registration card

<p><b>ICRC REGISTRATION CARD</b></p>  <p>INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY 19, AVENUE DE LA PAIX 1202 GENEVA – SWITZERLAND [Or put address of delegation]</p>	<p><b>ICRC IDENTIFICATION CARD</b></p>  <p>INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS [Add address of delegation]</p>
<p><b>ICRC No :</b> .....</p> <p><b>FULL NAME</b> (as expressed locally) ..... Alias/other name(s) ..... Father's name ..... Mother's name ..... Date &amp; place of birth ..... Sex M / F Nationality/Origin ..... Status ..... Profession ..... Rank &amp; Service No. .... Date &amp; place of arrest/capture ..... Arrested by ..... Place of detention ..... Date of arrival .....</p> <p><b>NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN</b> Full name ..... Relationship ..... Detailed address ..... Date ..... Signature ..... Tel/E-mail ..... CE/En/05.03/ACR</p>	<p><b>ICRC No</b> .....</p> <p><b>FULL NAME</b> ..... Date of birth ..... Signature .....</p> <p>PLEASE KEEP THIS CARD WITH YOU WHILE IN DETENTION</p>

Module 5: Responding to the consequences of armed conflict



**S. 5C**

## Module 5: Responding to the consequences of armed conflict



# Through the eyes of prisoners

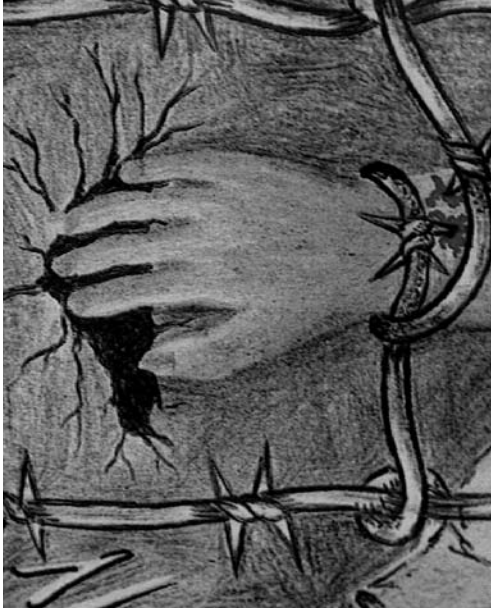
*I left my wife and daughter for five years and eight months. The results are many social and psychological complications. We both changed, but in opposite directions and a gap has opened between me and my daughter while I was in prison. – a detainee, released in 1998*

*The shock when you get out of prison is just the same as when you enter it; it's just as shocking. Now you are free but you don't know what to do with this freedom. How are you going to start your life all over again? – a detainee who spent six years in prison, released in 1997*

**Source:** *Facing freedom*, ICRC, 2001.



ICRC



ICRC

## Exploration 5D: Focus on restoring family links

Exploration 5D focuses on the plight of families separated by armed conflict and the effort needed to restore and maintain contact between family members. Students reflect on the situation in which these families

find themselves and learn about the methods that humanitarian workers use to find 'lost' family members. They also consider the framework that international humanitarian law (IHL) provides for related efforts.

### OBJECTIVES

- to be aware of the plight of families who have been separated by war
- to understand the scale of the effort required to restore and maintain links between separated family members



### TEACHER RESOURCES

5D.1 Restoring family links




### STUDENT RESOURCES

5D.2 Photo collage 5D (see separate sheet)

5D.3 Red Cross message form

5D.4 Tracing request form

5D.5 Video and transcript: *The missing: The right to know* (4'30)  DVD

### PREPARATION

In the *Methodology Guide*, review teaching methods 1 (Discussion), 2 (Brainstorming), 6 (Using stories, photos and videos) and 7 (Writing and reflecting).

### TIME

One 45-minute session

## The exploration

### 1. SEPARATED BY ARMED CONFLICT (10 minutes)

Explain to students that families are forced to flee their homes as a result of armed conflict, and that family members are often separated.

Introduce “Photo collage 5D,” which gives an idea of what separated family members go through and of the effort involved in finding ‘lost’ relatives.



Ask students for their reactions.

#### Possible questions:

- > Have you ever been lost? What do you remember about the experience? How old were you? How were you found?
- > What problems might arise for families who are separated? For children? For prisoners? For the elderly?

Then give students the following statistics on the number of children separated from their families as a result of armed conflict.

*More than half of the estimated 50 million refugees and internally displaced people in the world today are children and adolescents. More than two million are children who have been separated from their families. As unaccompanied children, they are especially vulnerable to extreme poverty and neglect, abuse, exploitation and recruitment as child soldiers.*

To help students grasp the significance of these figures ask them questions such as:

- > How many of us are in this classroom? How many classrooms would it take to make up two million people?

Explore how children might become separated from their families during armed conflict.

*[For example: their parents, or the adults responsible for them, are killed or imprisoned; they get lost during their flight from home; they are away from home when their families are suddenly forced to flee; they are left by themselves, briefly, while their parents search for food or water; they are abducted]*

#### Possible question:

- > Can you think of reasons why such separations might be the result of deliberate decisions?  
*[For example: children are temporarily entrusted to a neighbour or even to a stranger; they are placed in orphanages by parents in the hope that they will be safer there and better provided for; they are abandoned by destitute or frightened parents; they decide to leave home to look for food or work; they join armed forces or groups; they are evacuated]*

Discuss the significance of children and other vulnerable people being separated from their families as a result of armed conflict.

## The exploration

### 2. RESTORING CONTACT (10 minutes)

Explain to students that people separated from their families by armed conflict are entitled to exchange personal news with their relatives, wherever they are. However, sometimes circumstances make this difficult.

Have students brainstorm about how contact between families separated by armed conflict can be re-established when the usual means of communication are no longer available.

Use the “Red Cross message form” to show students one way in which separated relatives can communicate with one another.

 **TEACHER**  
5D.1 RESOURCES

 **STUDENT**  
5D.3 RESOURCES

#### Possible questions:

- > What kinds of information can people communicate in these messages?
- > Why do Red Cross workers check the contents of Red Cross messages before delivering them?  
*[A Red Cross message should be strictly personal in nature and must not contain sensitive information concerning the armed conflict or political matters. This could endanger the sender, the recipient or the Red Cross workers delivering the message or could cause the warring parties to object to the sending of messages.]*
- > What problems might humanitarian workers encounter when they try to re-establish contact between family members?  
*[For example: children too young or too traumatized to communicate, language differences, ongoing combat, inability to get access across fighting lines that divide family members, families scattered over large areas, relatives who have fled, been displaced or are dead]*

### 3. TRACING MISSING PEOPLE (10 minutes)

Explain to students that efforts to re-establish contact between separated family members may fail and parents, siblings, spouses and children may remain without news of their relatives. In such cases, additional efforts are necessary to ascertain the whereabouts of those who are missing.

#### Possible questions:

- > What kind of information should be collected in order to trace missing people?
- > Who should collect this information?  
*[For example: the government, the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), non-governmental organizations (NGOs)]*
- > Why might it be important to respect the privacy of all concerned parties while tracing a missing person?

Explain that those fighting must do everything possible to account for people who have been reported missing, and humanitarian organizations may support them in this task.

Use the “Tracing request form” to help students understand the range of family information that the ICRC collects in its efforts to find people who are missing as a result of armed conflict.

 **STUDENT**  
5D.4 RESOURCES

## The exploration

### Possible questions:

- > What steps can a humanitarian worker take to trace a missing person?  
*[For example: going to a person's last known address; checking at hospitals and cemeteries; searching lists of refugees and other displaced persons; enquiring at prisons; asking local authorities to gather information from villagers; publicizing lists of names by using newspapers, radio, the Internet, posters, display boards; displaying photos; taking parents to children's centres]*
- > Why do you think it is often so difficult to gather information about people who are missing as a result of armed conflict?

### 4. REUNITING RELATIVES (10 minutes)

Explain to students that those fighting must also facilitate the reunion of families separated by armed conflict and support humanitarian organizations who are engaged in that task. Have students, working in pairs, consider some of the difficulties that humanitarian workers might face in arranging family reunions.

### Possible questions:

- > What steps should be taken prior to reuniting someone with his or her family?  
*[For example: verifying that those being reunited are indeed related; making sure that they want to be reunited; determining whether such a reunion is safe]*
- > What criteria should be used to determine whether to reunite a child living in a camp for displaced persons with his family living in a war-torn city?  
*[For example: the degree of vulnerability; an age limit for males to avoid helping actual or potential combatants; the security situation; not placing people in situations that are worse than those in which they find themselves]*

### 5. CLOSE (5 minutes)

Show the video *The missing: The right to know*. Then ask students for their reactions.



### Possible questions:

- > What feelings do these testimonies evoke?
- > What else can be done to help families establish the fate of their loved ones?



### KEY IDEAS

- Armed conflict results in vast numbers of people becoming separated from their families, without any means of communicating with them.
- IHL requires that action be taken to restore and maintain family links between separated family members and to clarify the fate of missing persons.
- Various actions are required to reunite a single family and to trace missing persons.

## Extension activities

### THE PLIGHT OF FAMILIES

Think about the anguish of families who are without news of their missing relatives – families who do not know whether their loved ones are wounded, lost, hungry, imprisoned or dead.

Write a short poem or essay about their plight.

*I still believe and hope  
that my husband is alive  
and will come back to his  
family so we can all live  
normally together. But I  
need to know his fate –  
one way or another. There  
are thousands like me.  
We deserve answers to  
our questions.  
– a woman whose  
husband has been  
missing for several years*

### MESSAGE OF HOPE

Read the following story.

#### From Manila to Baghdad: hope in a family message

*As she does every morning, Maria listens to the news on the radio. The news from the Gulf is particularly alarming today: the bombing of Baghdad has begun. Maria begins to worry about her sister, who is working as a nurse in Iraq and from whom she has not heard for several months. The telephone lines between the Philippines, where she is living, and Baghdad, have been cut and the post no longer functions.*

*Maria despairs of ever seeing her sister again.*

*Some days later, she hears talk of the tracing service of the Philippine Red Cross in Manila. She goes there at once and her hopes revive: she is encouraged to write a family message which will be delivered to her sister through the ICRC delegates in Iraq. Less than a month later, Maria receives a call from the Red Cross telling her that a reply to her message has arrived. Maria sheds tears of relief – her sister is alive!*

– ICRC News

Write a message, as if you were Maria writing to her sister; and then write another message as if you were the sister replying.

## Extension activities

### RESTORING FAMILY LINKS

Look again at “Photo collage 5D.” Note the many ways in which emotions are expressed.



Make a poster to inform people about reuniting separated family members and tracing missing people. Choose a caption for your poster.

OR

Inspired by the following story, convey the emotions of a family reunification in any art form.

#### Three women eager for Red Cross messages

*It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop in the main room of the old farmhouse in northern Albania as Andye Kortoci, a village elder, began to read out Red Cross messages. The pages trembled in his rough hands, but no one noticed. The three women surrounding him hung on his every word.*

*Each woman had received a message: one from her brother, one from her husband and one from her son, all of whom had taken part in the conflict in Kosovo and had been detained in Serbia for nearly two years.*

*The three detainees come from the same village, Myhejan, where their absence weighs heavily on their families. Their work – cultivating fields, tending cattle and doing other farm chores – has been taken over, as far as possible, by the rest of the community. Even the children have to pitch in.*

*Selim Musa, an Albanian Red Cross worker, makes the trek to Myhejan about once every three months, to bring Red Cross messages that arrive from Serbia, via Tirana. So few visitors come to Myhejan that the villagers recognize his silhouette from afar. Selim Musa is the only link left between the detainees and their families in Albania.*  
– ICRC News

## Restoring family links

### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Families split apart, children alone with no one to look after them, parents who are imprisoned or dead or whose fate is unknown – these are some of the consequences of armed conflict. The total absence of communication adds immeasurably to the suffering.

### WHAT DOES IHL SAY?

International humanitarian law (IHL) addresses different aspects of the problem of families separated as a result of armed conflict.

*All people are entitled to give news of a personal nature to members of their families, wherever they may be, and to receive news from them.*

– Paraphrased from Article 25, Fourth Geneva Convention

*Families have the right to know what happened to their loved ones. Those fighting must do everything possible to account for people reported missing and must provide family members with any available information on their fate. They must also facilitate the work of organizations engaged in this task.*

– Paraphrased from Article 26, Fourth Geneva Convention and Articles 32 and 33, Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions

*Those fighting must do everything possible to facilitate the reunion of families separated as a result of armed conflict.*

– Paraphrased from Article 74, Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions.

### WHAT IS THE ICRC DOING ABOUT THE PROBLEM?

- establishing a Red Cross/Red Crescent communication network that enables people to restore contact and correspond with their families via Red Cross messages, cellular/satellite phones, radio broadcasts, and its family links website on the Internet;
- collecting information on people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, such as separated children and detainees, in order to let their families know what has become of them;
- making every effort to trace people who are unaccounted for, or whose families have had no news of them;
- acting as a neutral intermediary between families and warring parties in order to find out what happened to people reported missing;
- organizing, coordinating or facilitating the reunion of families across front lines and national borders;
- issuing International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) travel documents for people who no longer have identity papers as a result of armed conflict.

Information collected by the ICRC is managed in databases compiled by its delegations throughout the world. These databases enable the ICRC to monitor the situations of people who need help in re-establishing contact with their families or who otherwise need protection. The ICRC regards confidentiality to be a crucial consideration and takes precautions when it shares or publishes information.

The ICRC has 90 active databases. The largest ones include: Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories (with details on 206,000 individuals); Rwanda (187,000); the former Yugoslavia (167,000); the 2003 Gulf War (81,000); Ethiopia (68,000); Eritrea (61,000); Sri Lanka (52,000); Colombia (51,000); Afghanistan (44,000); Angola (31,000); Peru (30,000); and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (27,000).

#### Relevant facts and figures – 2006

- 634,000 Red Cross messages were exchanged.
- 1,555 separated children were registered.
- 1,081 children were reunited with their families.
- The whereabouts of 11,569 people, for whom tracing requests had been filed, was established.
- At the end of the year, efforts were still being made to locate 69,049 missing persons.

Source: ICRC, Annual Report 2006



# S.5D

## Module 5: Responding to the consequences of armed conflict



## Video transcript

# The missing: The right to know

### Voice 1 - Woman

Six years have passed since I lost every trace of my sons and my husband. We are still looking for thousands of men who disappeared. We deserve the right to bury our dead in a dignified manner. It's important not just for me but for all the other mothers that there is a memorial. As long as I can I will fight for the truth about where my husband is and where my children are. I live on their memories. I have their voices in my head.

### Voice 2 - Man

The police entered the village and came to the house. They separated us from the men, who were taken upstairs in the house. The women, children and the elderly were ordered to leave. You see the windows; from there they were waving to us. When we came back we saw our house, horrible and empty without our sons. Day after day we are in suspense, waiting. It would be better to know, once and for all, that they are in prison or dead. I just don't know.

### Voice 3 - Woman

My husband has been missing for two years. When he disappeared I lost my identity completely. We had plans for the future, and in one moment all of that was destroyed. My attitude was, my husband might be alive, he might be dead. But I wanted to know the final truth. The first moment I saw the things I recognized them all – trousers, shirt, underwear, everything was there. In a way, it is good that I found my husband. I think it is a happiness of sorts. The hardest thing would be never to have found him.

### Voice 4 - Man

My brother and his two friends were patrolling the border. Suddenly they were kidnapped. They have been held hostage for seven months, and we don't know what's happening. My brother was part of us, and when a part of you is missing you feel that your family will break up. It was the first time I saw my father cry. If a soldier is killed, you know he is killed. If he is wounded, you know. But a kidnap, you know nothing, nothing. We need to be united again and do everything that we can to bring him back.

### Voice 5 - Woman

Armed men came towards us. They took my sons and put them in a lorry. They went around, picking up three or four here, five or six there. They drove away two truckloads. My children left and never returned. I never saw them again. It has been years. The hardest thing is not knowing. If I knew what had become of them, I could bear it. It's not knowing that's hard. I have nothing left. If they're dead, give me their bodies. If they are alive, give them back to me. If they're in prison, let me visit them, even if they're in for life. Since then I have known no joy. My life is in ruins.

### Narrator

For some, the silence is over. For many more, the anguish goes on. Families have the right to know.

**Source:** The missing: the right to know, ICRC, 2003.

## Exploration 5E: Ethics of humanitarian action

Exploration 5E introduces students to some of the principles that guide humanitarian action in general and the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in particular. Students learn how the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence are applied in practice. They do this by analysing actual dilemmas – presented in the form of

case-studies – that humanitarian workers have encountered during their work.

(These cases can be explored at one time together, or separately, along with any of the explorations in this module to which they might apply.)

### OBJECTIVES

- to understand that the principles of humanity and impartiality guide all humanitarian action
- to be aware that two additional principles – neutrality and independence – characterize the ICRC's action
- to understand some of the dilemmas that humanitarian workers might encounter while doing their work



### STUDENT RESOURCES

5E.1 Working principles in humanitarian action

5E.2 Ethical dilemmas in humanitarian action

### PREPARATION

Prepare to display the three key principles where all can see for reference during step 1. Select dilemmas from “Ethical dilemmas in humanitarian action” for use in step 3.

In the *Methodology Guide*, review teaching methods 1 (Discussion), 3 (“No easy answers”), 4 (Using dilemmas), 7 (Writing and reflecting) and 10 (Gathering stories and news) and workshop 9 (“Using personal experience: Impartiality, neutrality and independence”).

If possible, view the relevant chapter of the teacher video (*Using personal experience to understand concepts*).

### TIME

One 45-minute session

## The exploration

### 1. THE IDEA OF WORKING PRINCIPLES (10 minutes)

Discuss the idea that people adopt principles to guide their work.

#### Possible questions:

- > Do you know of any specific codes that regulate the behaviour of people in their professions?  
*[For example: the Hippocratic oath, which lists rules and duties for doctors; codes of ethics for journalists, which forbid journalists from disclosing the sources of their information if doing so might endanger the informants or violate their privacy; the attorney-client privilege, which keeps the communication between lawyers and their clients confidential]*
- > What principles do you think should guide humanitarian workers in acting on behalf of victims of armed conflict?

Tell students that all humanitarian organizations have codes of conduct. Explain that the broad goal of humanitarian action is to prevent and alleviate suffering and to protect life and dignity (humanity). To achieve this goal, humanitarian organizations give aid without discrimination of any kind (impartiality). In addition, the ICRC's code of conduct specifically requires it not to take sides (neutrality) and to remain detached from political and military interests (independence).

Display the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence – as listed below – where all can see, and explain the ICRC's interpretation of each.

Explain to students that these principles are not themselves the goal of humanitarian action, but essential means to carry out humanitarian tasks.

#### **Impartiality** (no discrimination, priority based on needs)

The ICRC does not discriminate among people on the grounds of their nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, social class or political opinions. Its work is guided solely by the needs of individuals, with priority being given to the most urgent cases.

#### **Neutrality** (not taking sides)

In order to secure the confidence of all parties, the ICRC refrains from taking sides in armed conflict or other situations of violence or in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

#### **Independence** (resisting pressure)

The ICRC resists any pressure from outsiders – whether they are donors, international bodies, governments or armed groups – that would affect its ability to respond effectively to humanitarian needs, in keeping with its principles.

## The exploration

### 2. APPLYING WORKING PRINCIPLES IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (15 minutes)

Have students work in pairs to apply the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence to the situations presented in “Working principles in humanitarian action.”

**STUDENT**  
5E.1 **RESOURCES**

Reconvene the class to discuss their ideas about each of the situations.

#### Possible questions:

- > What principle is the driving force behind the way an ICRC delegate should respond to the situation?
- > What should be the main consideration for an ICRC delegate in these situations?

You can use the following statement to help students see that often more than one of these three principles is involved.

*The ICRC's principles of neutrality (not taking sides), impartiality (serve all victims according to needs) and independence (no subordination to political authority) require that the ICRC resist attempts by a contesting faction to co-opt its services or to deny those services to the opposition. This resistance has to be non-violent and non-partisan. (...) As a result, ICRC delegates must remain patient, discreet, non-violent (...) and willing to live with dilemmas.*  
– Nicholas Berry, War and the Red Cross

### 3. ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION (15 minutes)

Humanitarian action is sometimes criticized and its value questioned. Its critics often point to the ethical dilemmas that humanitarian workers encounter while performing their tasks.

#### NOTE

Explain, if needed, that an ‘ethical dilemma’ is a situation in which the pursuit of one worthy goal conflicts with another worthy goal or leads to harm as well as good.

Ask students to identify the ethical dilemmas in the situations presented in “Ethical dilemmas in humanitarian action,” and discuss whether or not to continue humanitarian efforts. Have them give reasons for their answers and develop related arguments.

**STUDENT**  
5E.2 **RESOURCES**

## The exploration

### 4. CLOSE (5 minutes)

Discuss how students considered each of these principles as they worked out their decisions.

#### Possible question:

> Why are the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence useful in humanitarian action?

*[By being impartial, humanitarian workers show that they care for other people, irrespective of who they are, and gain the confidence of all parties. By remaining neutral, they can move through war zones to help victims on all sides in an armed conflict. By being independent, they can respond effectively to humanitarian needs without being influenced by any other considerations.]*



#### KEY IDEAS

- All humanitarian organizations have codes of conduct that include important working principles.
- The ICRC places a particular emphasis on the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence because of the nature of its activities.
- Humanitarian workers encounter various ethical dilemmas for which satisfactory solutions are not always available. Doing nothing is also a decision and has consequences.

#### NOTE

Students may say that some situations are 'no-win' (that is, they cannot be resolved satisfactorily no matter what decision is made). Point out that even in such situations, humanitarian workers cannot avoid making a choice. Doing nothing is as much a choice as taking a specific action.

## Extension activities

### IMPARTIALITY, NEUTRALITY AND INDEPENDENCE AROUND YOU

Think about how the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence are applied in everyday situations.

Write an essay exploring why we become angry when we suspect that someone in authority (e.g. a judge, police officer, teacher or coach) is not being impartial in how he or she treats people.

OR

Find a story – historical, religious or literary – in which being neutral (or not being neutral) mattered.

OR

Make a class presentation describing a situation in which you feel someone's behaviour was independent (or was not independent).

### YOU ARE THERE – DILEMMAS

Imagine you are a humanitarian worker in one of the situations provided in the explorations in Module 5 (or a situation inspired by them).

In small groups, do a role-playing exercise based on one of the following situations:

- an argument over what to do when faced with the problem;
- an interview with the press in which your decisions are criticized;
- responding to complaints from the victims or co-workers.

*In one class, students imagined and dramatized the situation of an aid worker at the entrance to a refugee camp. The worker confronts a family that wants to enter but is fearful of enemies inside the camp. The head of the family insists that he be allowed to keep his gun to protect his sick wife and their baby. The family is also terrified of becoming separated.*

*After they acted out the scenario, the class discussed the principles the aid worker had to take into account and whether some principles conflicted with others in this situation.*



# Working principles in humanitarian action



S. Farell/ICRC

## Regional famine

Drought and prolonged warfare bring about famine in a particular region. A humanitarian organization develops a veterinary project to aid nomadic people in the region whose survival depends on their herds of cattle. The people of one clan or another often say to

humanitarian workers, "You can't go to that other clan because they are our enemies. How can you help us if you help them?"



A. Gutman/ICRC

## Wounded fighter

A very seriously wounded rebel fighter has just been transferred to a hospital, where he is being treated. Two government soldiers, who are less seriously wounded, arrive at the hospital. As the small medical staff continues to treat the rebel, the soldiers confront them,

saying, "You must be on his side if you're helping him and making us wait. Don't you know what he did to us? We thought you were supposed to be neutral."

# Working principles in humanitarian action



B. Heger/ICRC

## Corporate funding

A local humanitarian organization is seeking funds to assist thousands of displaced persons in the north of a war-torn country. It is approached by a well-known international businessman who says that his company would pay for relief assistance directed to the people

living in a town in the south – where he owns a factory – in order to ease the tensions that prevent many workers from going to work. The humanitarian organization refuses the offer. The businessman says, “Why won’t you take this money to help these people?”

**Question:** For each situation, what answer would you give if you were a humanitarian worker?

Explain the principle behind each answer.

# Ethical dilemmas in humanitarian action

## Is humanitarian action prolonging the war?

Humanitarian organisations came to the rescue of desperate civilians in a war-torn area. Since these organisations provided outside support, the fighting groups were able to ignore the needs of their own civilians. This outside aid enabled them to use all their country's resources to supply their soldiers. And that helped to keep the war from ending.

## Is humanitarian action providing a pretext for outsiders to remain uninvolved?

A country was at war. Casualties among civilians were enormous. Some people in other countries tried to draw attention to the plight of victims. But no foreign government was willing to intervene either to bring the war to an end or to put pressure on the warring parties to spare the lives of civilians. "What does it mean to try to bring humanitarian assistance when we know perfectly well that it will be only a 'drop in the ocean' and that without foreign political pressure or military intervention, we humanitarian organizations just provide a good conscience for the rest of the world," lamented a humanitarian worker.

## Is humanitarian action approving forced displacement of civilians?

To reinforce control of a village in a fighting zone where rebel fighters used to shelter, the government forced civilians to settle in a camp 30 kilometres from their homes. Humanitarian organizations were asked to bring food and medical assistance to the camp. Carrying out this request, however, would imply that the humanitarian organizations approved of the forced displacement of civilians.

## Questions:

- > What ethical dilemma does each of these situations present?
- > In each situation, do you think humanitarian efforts should be continued?

**OBJECTIVE**

- to become aware of humanitarian action being undertaken around the world

**1. What is happening?**

Search the media for information about international humanitarian organizations. Access their websites, or contact them, to learn more about their activities. List the organizations you research, and outline their primary activities.

**2. What dilemmas are humanitarian workers facing?**

Identify a dilemma in humanitarian action that you find in the news media or through research. Analyse the dilemma:

- > Options: What courses of action are available?
- > Consequences: What are the possible consequences of each course of action (intended/unintended, positive/negative, short- and long-term)?
- > Perspectives: How do different people view the situation and the available courses of action?
- > Decision: What would you recommend that the humanitarian workers do?

# Assessment

## METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

### ONGOING ASSESSMENT

Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) provides teachers with daily opportunities to find out what their students are learning and what misconceptions they might have. Active teaching methods, such as class discussion, small group work, brainstorming and role-playing all provide such opportunities.

Take five minutes at the end of class to have students write down one- or two-sentence answers to the following questions:

- > What did you learn today?
- > What remaining questions do you have?

Read through their responses, and use them to build on students' knowledge and clarify any misconceptions for the next lesson.

### PORTFOLIO OF STUDENT WORK

In each module, students are asked to carry out activities such as interviewing people, illustrating concepts with poems, plays or artwork and writing research papers on particular topics.

Keep a folder or portfolio for each student, containing written work, artwork, interviews and news clippings that he or she has contributed in class. Periodically go over the student's work with him or her to monitor progress in understanding international humanitarian law (IHL).

Post samples of students' work where all can see.

### END-OF-MODULE QUESTIONS

After Module 5 is completed, you might want to devote the last class session to a written assessment of what students have learned. You could do this with one essay question (20-30 minutes) and two or three short-answer questions (10 minutes each).

#### Possible essay questions:

- > What are some of the ethical dilemmas that humanitarian workers face? Give examples.
- > Explain the meaning of impartiality, neutrality and independence, and give an example of each.

#### Possible short-answer questions:

- > What does the effort to trace missing people entail?
- > Describe five ways in which war disrupts the normal supports of life.
- > List three things that humanitarian workers need to plan for when providing a camp for displaced persons.

## Assessment

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You could ask students to formulate other questions in small groups and then select one of them as the essay question for the whole class. Or you could ask each student to propose a question and then answer it. (The student would be assessed on the quality of the question as well as on the answer.) Or you could select a quote from a newspaper article, a sidebar in the materials or another source and ask students to identify the main point being made in the quote and whether they agree or disagree with it.

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### CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT

An effective student response is one which:

- uses concepts, such as bystander, combatant, dilemma or chain reaction and other terms in the EHL materials;
- gives concrete examples to back up points;
- includes examples from a variety of sources, such as the news media, interviews, class discussion and outside reading.

The above techniques are simply suggestions to help you assess your students' work on the EHL materials. Feel free to adapt them to your needs.

## Web resources

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### RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS

- Aid for people affected by war, International Committee of the Red Cross  
(<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/assistance?opendocument>)
- Protecting civilians in wartime, International Committee of the Red Cross  
([http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/civilian\\_population?OpenDocument](http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/civilian_population?OpenDocument))
- Protecting refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
(<http://www.unhcr.org/protect.html>)
- Refugees and migrants, Amnesty International  
(<http://www.amnesty.org/en/refugees-and-migrants>)
- Refugees, Human Rights Watch  
([http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=refugees&document\\_limit=0,2](http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=refugees&document_limit=0,2))
- Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on the human rights of internally displaced persons  
(<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/idp/index.htm>)
- Strengthening protection and respect for prisoners and detainees, International Committee of the Red Cross  
(<http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/detention?OpenDocument>)
- Restoring contact between families separated by war, International Committee of the Red Cross  
([http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/family\\_links?OpenDocument](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/family_links?OpenDocument))
- Project Disappeared  
(<http://www.desaparecidos.org/arg/eng.html>)
- The future of independent and neutral humanitarian action in the International Committee of the Red Cross  
([http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/section\\_debate\\_on\\_humanitarian\\_action?OpenDocument](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/section_debate_on_humanitarian_action?OpenDocument))

### HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

#### United Nations:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
(<http://www.unhcr.org>)
- United Nations World Food Programme  
(<http://www.wfp.org>)
- United Nations Development Programme  
(<http://www.undp.org>)
- United Nations Children's Fund  
(<http://www.unicef.org>)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
(<http://ochaonline.un.org>)
- International Organization for Migration  
(<http://www.iom.int>)

## Web resources

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### International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:

- International Committee of the Red Cross  
(<http://www.icrc.org>)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
(<http://www.ifrc.org>)
- International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement  
(<http://www.redcross.int>)

### International non-governmental organizations:

- Care  
(<http://www.care.org>)
- Danish Refugee Council  
(<http://www.drc.dk>)
- Doctors Without Borders/*Médecins Sans Frontières*  
(<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org>)
- Handicap International  
(<http://www.handicap-international.org>)
- International Rescue Committee  
(<http://www.theirc.org>)
- Norwegian Refugee Council  
(<http://www.nrc.no>)
- Oxfam  
(<http://www.oxfam.org>)
- Save the Children  
(<http://www.savethechildren.com>)
- World Concern  
(<http://www.worldconcern.org>)
- World Vision  
(<http://www.worldvision.org>)

### Human rights and advocacy organizations:

- Amnesty International  
(<http://www.amnesty.org>)
- Human Rights Watch  
(<http://www.hrw.org>)
- Refugees International  
(<http://www.refugeesinternational.org>)



## Notes

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