

January – December 2025



Caring for conflict-affected people

Armed conflicts have become the defining feature of our time. The number of armed conflicts in the world has been constantly rising since the late 1990s, and as of 2024, there were around 130 happening around the world. The nature of fighting has also evolved—they have become longer and more destructive. During conflicts, the rules that aim to protect civilians—international humanitarian law (IHL)—have been bent, dismantled or ignored altogether.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, we have observed that although fighting has not completely ended, there has been a noticeable reduction in hostilities. In some areas, the humanitarian consequences of decades of armed conflicts can still be felt by the people. In these places, farmers and fishermen displaced by fighting are unable to sustain their livelihoods; they may still be harassed or live in fear because of pressure from warring parties.

During and after conflicts, civilians often pay the highest price.

It is for this reason that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been on the front line for humanity since 1863, working to preserve human dignity and relieve human suffering whenever war or armed violence strikes.

Present in over 90 countries worldwide, and in the Philippines since World War II, we provide humanitarian assistance to whoever needs it most, regardless of race, religion, gender or politics. In collaboration with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners globally, we do everything we can to deliver life-saving aid, reconnect families and locate missing people. We press authorities to give us access to detainees and strive to improve their living conditions.

We operate in close proximity with communities that have been most affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence.

We actively engage with the authorities and armed forces on all sides, urging them to fulfil their duty under the rules of war to protect from harm those who don't fight, including in the digital sphere. We hold sensitive discussions, often bilaterally and always in confidence, with the aim to prevent further harm and help all sides better comply with international humanitarian law.

With our operational partner the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), we will continue to work hard and serve the most vulnerable people in the country while fulfilling the mandate bestowed upon us under the Geneva Conventions.

IHL AND HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES



1,840 participants

from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Philippine Coast Guard, Office of the Civil Defense and other government agencies attended IHL orientations



184 people

from non-state armed groups, government offices, the academe and religious groups in Manila and Mindanao attended discussions highlighting the intersections between IHL and Islamic law related to armed conflict (Siyar)



85 journalists

from Bukidnon, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cotabato, Iligan and Marawi, attended IHL orientations to inform them of their protections under IHL and enrich their reportage



24 states

in the Asia Pacific region represented in an IHL conference, allowing them to strengthen their dialogue and partnership on key IHL issues



IHL handbook

officially handed to the PNP as part of ongoing institutional collaboration, to encourage the application of a humanitarian lens in their operational and tactical decision-making



IHL and Islamic law book in Tagalog

published by the ICRC and National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. The book emphasizes the long-standing rules on protecting civilians, prisoners, and non-combatants during armed conflicts.



At least 24 states in Asia Pacific have committed to greater political support for IHL during a 2025 regional conference held in Manila. Bangladesh and Nepal have since joined the Global Initiative to Galvanise Political Commitment to IHL.

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The Philippines is an active supporter of IHL and is taking a leading role in global efforts to revitalise states' commitment to these lifesaving rules. In a world where there are approximately 130 armed conflicts – many of high intensity – we need more states to consistently champion the rules of war to reduce suffering and preserve pathways back to peace.

ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric
during her visit to the Philippines in August 2025



Photos: N. Celis/ICRC

ADVOCATING FOR AFFECTED PEOPLE



300 relatives of people who went missing
during the 2017 Marawi conflict received support through information and training activities and dialogues with authorities



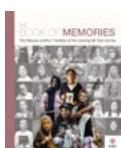
100 participants
attended the IHL and Islam orientation focusing on Marawi's missing people and the management of the dead



57 officers
from the National Bureau of Investigation and PNP-Forensic Group participated in a specialized training focusing on the search, recovery, analysis and identification of skeletal human remains



Ensured proximity with affected people
while sustaining confidential and bilateral dialogues with parties to the conflict to remind them of their responsibilities under IHL



“The Book of Memories”
was published, featuring 32 families and the memories of their loved ones who went missing in the 2017 Marawi conflict, to highlight their plight and relentless search for answers



Humanitarian forensic practices
Provided advice to the authorities, including the inter-agency Technical Working Group for the Identification, Exhumation, and Documentation of Human Remains in the Maqbara cemetery; and donated DNA laboratory equipment



Engaged with the Bangsamoro Darul-Ifta'
leading to the issuance of a fatwa supporting the humanitarian exhumation of remains in the Maqbara cemetery in Marawi

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It has been a long time since I last saw my children. It is only now that they have written to me.

I tried to be strong at first, but I suddenly burst into tears when I read their message.

Raffy*, a detainee in Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail who for 30 years hadn't seen or heard from his children in Iloilo. He was able to get in touch with them again through the exchange of Red Cross messages facilitated by the ICRC and PRC.

* Name changed to protect his identity



Photo: M. Lucero/ICRC

DETENTION



116,000 detainees

in Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) jails benefit from the Health Information System, which will help the authorities improve the management of inmates' diseases and strategically plan the distribution of health resources



25,050 inmates in six BJMP jails

benefited from water supply, storage, kitchen and ventilation rehabilitation



25,000 detainees

benefitted from the rehabilitation of water systems in detention facilities in Muntinlupa, Quezon City, General Santos and Sulu



15,000 detainees

received treatment for scabies in 10 jails all over Metro Manila



12,800 detainees in 18 jails

benefitted from the donation of recreational materials, cleaning items, tablet devices, headsets and SIM cards



2,300 hygiene kits

distributed to BJMP and provincial jails in Laguna, Quezon province, Misamis Oriental, Surigao del Sur, Basilan, Zamboanga del Sur and Sulu



1,410 detainees and staff

in seven BJMP jails benefitted from emergency items and infrastructure measures that reduced climate change hazards



110 family visits

facilitated for 94 detainees and 180 relatives



81 BJMP officials

reviewed the country's fire code and Facility Development Process and Technical Minimum Standards to ensure that jails follow Philippine regulations and internationally accepted guidelines



69 Red Cross messages

delivered to detainees and their relatives, facilitated by the ICRC and PRC



65 people

participated in the ICRC-supported BJMP Annual Paralegal Conference, which focused on critical updates in the field of paralegal services, including the enhanced Paralegal Microlearning Series online learning platform



62 detention visits to 45 jails

managed by the BJMP, Bureau of Corrections, AFP, PNP, and local and provincial government units, to encourage officials to meet internationally accepted standards of detention

Detainees in Pasig City Jail participated in a focus group discussion for the Prisoners of Climate Change project of the ICRC and the BJMP which aims to reduce the vulnerability of overcrowded Philippine detention facilities to environmental and climate-related disasters like floods, extreme heat, and typhoons.



ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT



20,310 Marawi residents

including 500 displaced people, benefitted from the provision of chlorine, used for nine months of water treatment



9,270 conflict-affected people

in Visayas and Mindanao received cash grants to restore their livelihoods and help build resilience. Farmers also benefitted from the provision of seeds and equipment such as solar dryers.



6,630 people

in 12 villages in Mindanao benefitted from the rehabilitation of seven water supply systems. Ceramic water filters and water containers were also distributed.



6,400 people

in Visayas and Mindanao received food parcels or cash grants to cover their essential needs



1,240 people

in Mindanao received essential household items and hygiene kits to improve their quality of life



234 latrines and 48 shelters built

in several villages all over Mindanao



We feel somewhat better now after the ICRC provided support, but our situation is still difficult especially since it has been raining. We still don't have enough for our daily needs.

Toni, a farmer from a displaced community in Las Navas, Northern Samar, is among those who received livelihood assistance from the ICRC. He was also provided with a prosthetic leg as a result of being wounded in conflict.

Final simulation conducted during the Basic Emergency Care Course (BECC) for the hospital staff in Western Mindanao Command in Zamboanga City, Philippines.

The BECC aims to train doctors, nurses and frontline healthcare providers on preparedness and response in times of emergencies including armed conflicts.



Photo: M. Guiroy/ICRC

HEALTHCARE



400 people

including soldiers, community members and health care workers participated in 20 first aid and pre-hospital emergency care trainings, mostly in Mindanao



230 persons with disabilities

provided with physical rehabilitation services, prostheses/orthoses, financial support, meals, and accommodation through the Davao Jubilee Foundation



74 health facilities

in Mindanao supported through the donation of equipment, furniture, hygiene kits and other materials needed to improve delivery of services



18 weapon-wounded people

directly supported to cover costs for healthcare or referred to the appropriate specialists for treatment



Women and Children Protection Units

in Basilan General Hospital and Maguindanao Provincial Hospital rehabilitated to provide adequate care for victims of sexual violence



Around 235 residents from a remote, conflict-affected village in Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental received farming tools from the ICRC and the PRC.

PARTNERING WITH THE PHILIPPINE RED CROSS



32,800 people

in Negros Island and Masbate assisted through ICRC-supported PRC emergency interventions in health, welfare, livelihood, shelter, hygiene and potable water, as part of its response to Typhoons Tino and Opong



900 participants

from 40 PRC chapters completed Safer Access Framework learning sessions which reinforced their operational decision-making skills in high-risk environments



550 PRC staff and volunteers

attended various ICRC-supported training courses which built their technical skills for improved humanitarian response



220 deployments

involving 103 unique volunteers from 16 PRC chapters supported 74 ICRC activities promoting health, water, sanitation and economic security



10 schools

participated in the 2025 National Moot Court Competition on IHL, organized by the PRC with ICRC support



We have made it easier for people affected by armed conflict to contact us!
Text the **ICRC Community Contact Center (CCC)** at 0917-543-7313 (Globe) and 0998-960-0114 (Smart) or message our Facebook page at @ICRCph

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