

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

KUALA LUMPUR REGIONAL DELEGATION

January-June 2021



ICRC

ABOUT US

Founded in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organisation that operates worldwide in over 90 countries with an aim of helping and protecting victims of armed violence and strife by promoting compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) by all governments and parties to the conflict.

Our presence in Malaysia can be traced to the 1940s. In 1973, we formalized our presence by setting up an office in Kuala Lumpur on invitation from the government. Today, the ICRC Kuala Lumpur regional delegation oversees our activities in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam. With a team of 50 staff members, we work with our local partners in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, i.e. the Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS), Singapore Red Cross Society and Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society to fulfil our mandate as the reference organization for IHL.



VISITING DETAINEES AND ENGAGING WITH DETENTION AUTHORITIES

We have been carrying out visits to prisons and immigration detention centres in Malaysia to meet detainees with the support of the authorities since 2010. These visits serve the sole humanitarian objective of securing humane treatment and conditions of detention for all detainees. We support national efforts taken to improve standards of detention, covering areas such as health, hygiene and access to open air for detainees, among others.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- In the first half of 2021, we **continued to support the detention authorities** in their COVID-19 response as well as work on the scabies mitigation campaign jointly launched with the Immigration Department in late 2020
- Due to the movement restrictions brought on by the pandemic, our teams conducted online consultations with immigration detention centres to ensure continuous communication
- To promote local-level understanding of global best practices in the management of detention facilities, we collaborated with the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime** to launch the Bahasa Malaysia version of the Nelson Mandela Rules' eLearning modules, kicking off with a pilot project involving over 50 officers from the Prisons Department
- Working with the MRCS and other National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies under the global Restoring Family Links network, we helped detainees, including migrants, re-establish contact with their families. For instance, the volunteers of the MRCS branch in Sandakan, Sabah, recently supported the ICRC in delivering Red Cross messages (handwritten messages containing brief family news) We support Malaysia's detention reform ambitions. Towards this end, our delegates held several bilateral discussions with detention authorities from the **Immigration and Prisons Department**, as well as with other related entities, including the **Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)**, the **All Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia for the Reform of All Places of Detention and Universiti Malaya's Centre of Excellence for Research in AIDS**.

FACTS & FIGURES



33,490

PPE ITEMS

handed over to prisons and detention centres across the country as COVID-19 assistance



5,688

SOAPS

given to Immigration Detention Centres in Perak, Selangor, Sabah and Penang



41,200

SURGICAL MASKS

given to prisons in Selangor and Malacca and to detention centres in Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Penang and Kelantan



75

DIAPER PACKS

handed over to Immigration Detention Centres in Selangor, Perak and Penang

PROMOTING RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

We seek to prevent human suffering by promoting information about IHL, contributing to its development and working towards its compliance. We conduct training sessions, academic lectures and facilitate workshops on IHL for militaries, law enforcement agencies, academia and key government agencies and officials. We also engage with other organizations, including those in the humanitarian sector, civil society and those comprising youths, to foster an environment conducive for the respect for life and dignity, and to gain support for our work.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Malaysia

- **Center of Military and International Humanitarian Law (CoMIHL) at the National Defence University, Malaysia:** ICRC-supported courses and talks run by CoMIHL offered participants from various backgrounds (military, NGOs, academia) critical knowledge of IHL and related topics, including the protection of women and children in detention and conflict, the Nelson Mandela Rules and the humanitarian implications of new technologies of war, among others.
- **IHL sessions for students and academics:** From March to June, several awareness-generation sessions on IHL were organized in collaboration with top-tier higher learning institutions in Malaysia such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), University of Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Malaya. On March 29, a virtual regional academic round table co-organized with UiTM was held for over 50 participants from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines and Japan, with specialized discussions centering around teaching IHL amid the new normal. Other initiatives included sessions to introduce the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as screening movies featuring principles of IHL and related issues.
- **Engaging the armed and security forces:** In February, our delegates participated in the annual pre-deployment briefing for the International Monitoring Team (IMT-M16) to Mindanao, elaborating upon our role and mandate as well as activities during times of conflict. We were also invited to participate in the Five Powers Defence Arrangements (FDPA) Bersama Shield command post exercise in April, specifically to observe the conduct of operations in non-combatant evacuation exercises. We are currently also providing our expertise to the Army Legal HQ Joint Operations Doctrine that is being drafted, specifically covering the IHL element within the doctrine.

Singapore

- In January, our special adviser in Singapore delivered a lecture to 50 students enrolled in the Humanitarian Issues and Challenges programme at Singapore Polytechnic.

Brunei

- We continued our long-standing engagement with the **Royal Brunei Armed Forces Defence Academy** through various initiatives, including raising awareness about IHL during the 11th Command and Staff Course. As many as 33 participants attended the course, most of them being military officers from across Brunei Darussalam, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand and the USA.

FACTS & FIGURES



1,251

MILITARY OFFICERS & civilian personnel attended courses, seminars and workshops on Law of Armed Conflict across Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei



26

POLICE OFFICERS, personnel from Malaysia Maritime Enforcement Agency & military officers attended workshops and regional events on international policing standards and maritime issues



48

STUDENTS, academics & government officers attended courses, seminars, webinars and workshops on IHL

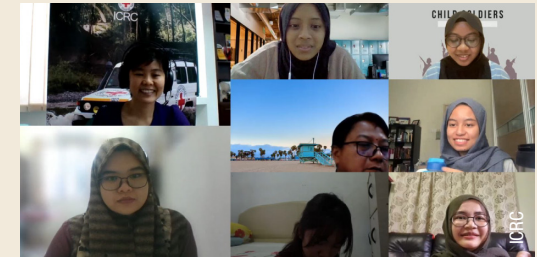


32

STUDENTS, academics, lawyers participated in IHL role play and moot court competitions



A talk on IHL under way during a course on Law of Armed Conflict



Students pursuing Moral Education at University Malaya attend an IHL workshop



The International Monitoring Team to Mindanao at the Malaysian Peacekeeping Centre attends a talk on IHL



Armed and security forces team gave a talk to officers from the Malaysian Armed Forces, Malaysian Police and the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency

OUR WORK IN SABAH

Along with the work carried out with the MRCS, we have also been present in Sabah since 2013 with the establishment of our office in Kota Kinabalu. In order to help remote communities who have very limited access to health care, the ICRC and MRCS volunteers often provide basic first-aid training “harmonisasi” (FATH) to villagers in accordance with available resources. Besides this, the community health volunteers work to identify various medical problems in their respective settlements.



A team comprising ICRC and MRCS staff members en route to Kampung Terian for an awareness-generation session on health, hygiene and COVID-19 prevention



The MRCS health project coordinator facilitates a Health and Hygiene session on Tuberculosis with community health volunteers in Kinarut settlement.



The MRCS health project coordinator facilitates a discussion on COVID-19 vaccinations for the community health volunteers in Kampung Terian.



CRC Health field officers during a session on community activity organised for community health volunteers in Telipok settlement.

FACTS & FIGURES



468

468 COMMUNITY HEALTH and NATIONAL SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS participated in health awareness sessions



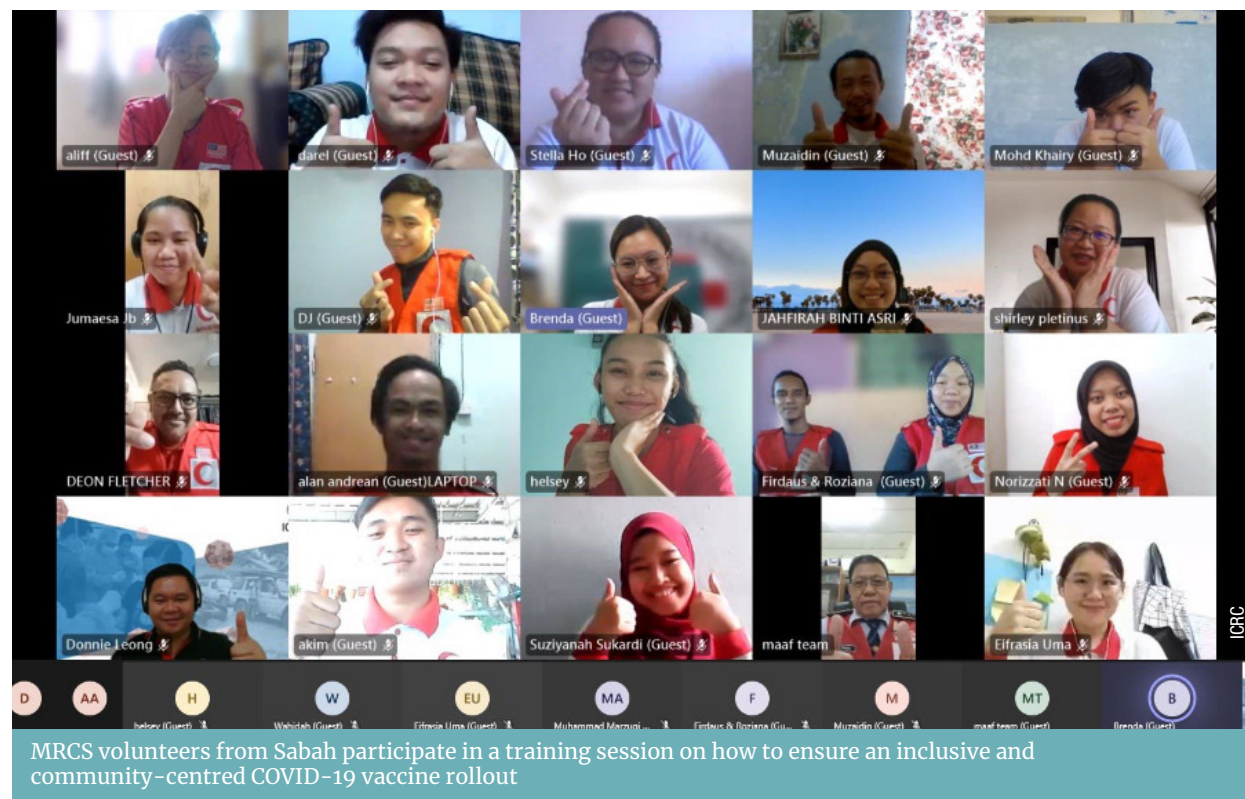
PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

SABAH

In Sabah, a total of 470 children participated in various quiz and colouring competitions on COVID-19 and related preventive measures organised at Alternative Learning Centres in Telipok and Kinarut settlements.

STRENGTHENING THE RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

We work in cooperation with various partners of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, including the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, the Singapore Red Cross and the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society. Working in tandem with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we also support the three National Societies strengthen their capacities and promote the Movement's work. This year, we supported the MRCS' food distribution activities and blood donation campaigns, as well as supplied PPEs and sanitation products to the National Society.



MRCS conducts a health and hygiene promotion session for school children in SK, Terian and Penampang with ICRC's support



Role-play simulations being used during an awareness-generation health session

FACTS & FIGURES

 **RM30K**

WORTH OF DIAPERS & FORMULA MILK
donated to Hospital Kent Sandakan for distribution
among migrant children in the paediatric ward

 **RM150K**

WORTH OF
food items, including rice, noodles, flour and
beverages, distributed among migrant families
in six districts by the MRCS Johor branch

HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY

We offer our practical expertise in humanitarian matters and IHL via operational and diplomatic means by participating in key multilateral forums, interacting with government representatives, national and regional think tanks, research institutions and the diplomatic community

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Malaysia

- Meeting with Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said, the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, to discuss **potential areas of support in detention** reforms and the implementation of the IHL Handbook for Malaysian Parliamentarians
- Courtesy visit of the Swedish, Finnish, Danish, Norwegian and Swiss Embassies in Malaysia to the ICRC's Kuala Lumpur headquarters
- We invited the Selangor-based think tank, Institut Darul Ehsan, to present its analysis on the current political and humanitarian environment in Malaysia
- Continued engagements with the **Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs** on the ICRC's work in Malaysia, IHL and other humanitarian issues of concern

Singapore

- Co-organized the Data Governance and Protection in Humanitarian Action Workshop with the **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies**. The workshop saw around 50 participants from various professional backgrounds discuss issues relating to information sharing, artificial intelligence and digital identities in humanitarian settings
- Meeting with the **Attorney-General's Chambers in Singapore** to discuss our work and collaboration related to IHL
- Continued engagement with the **ASEAN Desk of Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs** to further explore its interest in engaging and facilitating ICRC's work
- ICRC President Peter Maurer was invited by the International Institute for Strategic Studies to participate in the 2021 Shangri-La Dialogue. However, the event had to be called off due to the pandemic
- Completion and presentation of a research project on COVID-19 challenges to the ICRC, by the **Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy**



Future diplomats from the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations attend a session on IHL



Teams from Nordic and Swiss embassies in Malaysia on a visit to the ICRC Kuala Lumpur headquarters

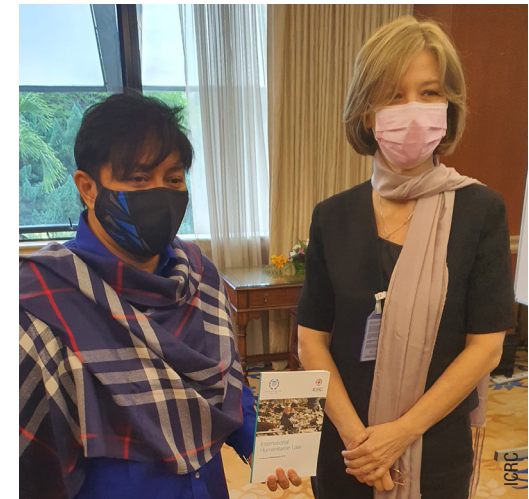
ICRC IN THE MEDIA

ICRC's armed forces and security coordinator Azhari Abdul Aziz's interview on his experience of coming from the military and joining the ICRC was featured in "[The Star](#)"

Media coverage on Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons coming into force featured across "Astro Awani", "Sin Chew Daily" and Brunei Darussalam's "[Borneo Bulletin](#)"

ICRC's spokesperson in Gaza Suhair Zakkout spoke with "[Astro Awani](#)" on humanitarian assistance and the importance of our work amidst ongoing hostilities

Field detention officer Alvin Yap was interviewed on ICRC's work in detention and Restoring Family Links by Malaysia's Chinese newspaper, "[Nanyang Siang Pau](#)"



Head of regional delegation Biljana Milosevic meets member of parliament Azalina Othman to discuss issues related to congestion in prisons and detention reforms



ICRC

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