



# budapest (regional)

The Budapest regional delegation, established in 1997, encourages and supports the States of the region in their efforts to ratify and implement IHL treaties. It assists the military authorities in incorporating IHL into their training programmes and exercises, and the civil authorities in integrating IHL into university and secondary school curricula. It also promotes research and debate on IHL and humanitarian issues among academic circles. The delegation supports the development of the region's National Societies and addresses the needs of the families of persons who went missing during the conflicts in Croatia between 1991 and 1995.

## COVERING

Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	281
Assistance	-
Prevention	1,629
Cooperation with National Societies	855
General	-
	<b>▶ 2,765</b>
	<i>of which: Overheads 169</i>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>101%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

<b>3</b> expatriates
<b>16</b> national staff (daily workers not included)

## KEY POINTS

### In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ through a visit to Slovakia by President Jakob Kellenberger, discussed contemporary challenges facing IHL and Slovakia's contribution to humanitarian action worldwide
- ▶ provided the Croatian Red Cross with training and technical support to boost its capacity to address the missing persons issue
- ▶ launched the *Book of Missing Persons in the Territory of the Republic of Croatia* to advance the quest to shed light on the fate of people unaccounted for and acknowledge the suffering of their families
- ▶ carried out a full round of visits to people detained in Croatia in relation to past conflicts
- ▶ assisted the national education authorities in implementing the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme by providing expertise and financing the translation of the education pack
- ▶ promoted IHL among students in the region's higher-education institutions by organizing the Friedrich Born IHL moot court competition in Warsaw

## CONTEXT

Bulgaria and Romania gained European Union (EU) membership in January, leaving Croatia the only country of the 11 Central European States covered by the delegation still neither an EU nor a NATO member. During the year, Croatia made significant progress towards EU membership, including receiving a supportive resolution from the European Parliament. In the second trimester, however, progress slowed because of the political actors' shift of attention to the campaign for parliamentary elections and the prolonged formation of a new government. Croatia's insistence on applying a Protected Ecological and Fishery Zone in the Adriatic despite protests from neighbouring coastal EU members also affected the negotiations adversely. NATO repeatedly signalled its readiness to invite the country to join at its 2008 summit. Slovenia, assuming the EU presidency as of January 2008, set as its humanitarian priority the issue of children and women in armed conflict.

In a majority of countries in the region, there were elections or cabinet reshuffles, many of which led to changes in ICRC government contacts.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>	
Detainees visited	72
Detainees visited and monitored individually	65
Number of visits carried out	12
Number of places of detention visited	12
<b>RESTORING FAMILY LINKS</b>	
<i>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</i>	
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2007 (people)	31
<b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued	28

1. Croatia

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC pursued a dialogue with State authorities to encourage the ratification and national implementation of IHL treaties. President Jakob Kellenberger's visit to Slovakia and ICRC discussions with ministerial representatives in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia helped to foster greater understanding of IHL implementation issues and to secure the authorities' commitment to comply with their obligations in this respect.

Having closed its permanent base in Croatia at the end of 2006, the ICRC concluded an agreement with the Croatian Red Cross to hand over responsibility for all issues concerning the missing to the National Society. The ICRC nonetheless continued to provide financial, technical and training support to the Croatian Red Cross's tracing service. The first *Book of Missing Persons in the Territory of the Republic of Croatia* was launched in February as a tool to help shed light on the fate of people still unaccounted for in relation to past conflicts in Croatia and acknowledge the suffering of the families.

In Croatia, a team of ICRC delegates carried out the annual visit to people detained in relation to past conflicts.

The ICRC provided the national authorities with legal expertise and support, in particular in the drafting of legislation on the protection of cultural property in time of armed conflict and on the use and protection of the emblem, and IHL training for military legal advisers. The role of judicial and prosecutorial bodies in the implementation of IHL, as well as the importance of training judges and prosecutors in IHL-related topics, was the theme of a regional seminar organized in Budapest.

In its prevention activities targeting civil society, the ICRC focused on consolidating its established network of media and think-tanks in the region that could act as relays in raising awareness of IHL and humanitarian issues among the general public. The implementation of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme in secondary schools progressed well, notably in Estonia and Slovenia. Cooperation with the region's leading universities was maintained. Nine university teams from the region participated in the Friedrich Born IHL moot court competition in November in Warsaw, organized in cooperation with the law faculty of the University of Warsaw and the Polish Red Cross.

## CIVILIANS

In Croatia, despite the ongoing process of exhumation and identification carried out by the Department for Detained and Missing Persons (DDMP), the whereabouts of more than 2,000 people recorded by the ICRC as missing in connection with the conflicts between 1991 and 1995 remained unknown.

In February, the first *Book of Missing Persons in the Territory of the Republic of Croatia* was published, listing the names of 2,384 individuals recorded as missing by the ICRC and the Croatian Red Cross and acknowledging the suffering of the families.

Following the closure of the ICRC mission in Zagreb at the end of 2006, the Croatian Red Cross officially took possession in April of the files containing data collected by the ICRC on all missing persons in Croatia. The National Society, working in close cooperation with the DDMP, thus assumed the task of continuing to collect and process tracing requests and to register additional information pertaining to existing cases provided by families.

The National Society's tracing service continued to receive capacity-building support from the ICRC in the handling of cases of missing persons, and ICRC Belgrade provided monitoring. Families of the missing and their associations pursued dialogue with the authorities, facilitated by the ICRC. The State Commissions on Missing Persons of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia continued to benefit from the ICRC's role as facilitator.

By the end of the year, the ICRC was still processing the cases – not related to the above-mentioned conflicts – of 31 people (including 5 females) still being sought.

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

People detained in Croatia in relation to past conflicts received visits from an ICRC team, including a doctor, in September and October. The report of the yearly round of visits was subsequently submitted to representatives of the Croatian Ministry of Justice and fuelled discussions with them on the conditions and treatment of detainees and relations with prison authorities.

- 72 detainees visited, of whom 65 monitored individually (including 2 females) and 12 newly registered, during 12 visits to 12 places of detention
- 15 detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC support
- 28 detention certificates issued to former detainees or their families

## AUTHORITIES

The ratification and national implementation of IHL treaties remained at the centre of discussions with representatives of relevant ministries, particularly in Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia, and, most notably, during the official visit of President Jakob Kellenberger to Slovakia in May. While the focus was on ratification of Additional Protocol III and the protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, discussions also took place on national measures concerning the repression of IHL violations, respect for the emblem and the availability of legal advisers to advise military commanders.

National IHL committees continued to receive ICRC support in carrying out their tasks. In Romania, the newly created national IHL committee began work. In Croatia, representatives of the Foreign Affairs Ministry shared their deliberations with the delegation regarding reshaping and reinvigorating the national IHL committee.

To counter widespread misuse of the emblem in Hungary, the ICRC broached the need to enhance the emblem's protection with the authorities and the National Society. In addition, to encourage respect for the emblem by pharmaceutical companies, it sent a letter to the European Medicines Agency, which regulated the trade of medical products in the EU, requesting its support in preventing the distribution of medicines displaying the red cross emblem on packaging and promotional materials.

Estonian legal experts visited Vienna, Austria, to study their counterparts' experiences in the practical application of the Hague Convention on Cultural Property. Hungarian Culture Ministry officials were extensively briefed by the ICRC on means of achieving the national implementation and application of existing legislation relating to the Hague Convention.

Military legal advisers from the region attended IHL training seminars in Austria, Hungary and Slovakia and learned from the ICRC about the organization's mandate and activities and the relevance and applicability of IHL in operations abroad.

- a national seminar on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict conducted in cooperation with the Hungarian Culture Ministry in Budapest
- judicial experts from 15 countries attended a regional seminar focusing on the implementation of IHL conducted in cooperation with the Hungarian Judicial Academy in Budapest

## CIVIL SOCIETY

### Raising awareness of IHL among the general public

Members of the media and various think-tanks continued to receive publications and briefings on the ICRC's mandate and activities. The handover of ICRC-collected data on missing persons to the Croatian Red Cross and the organization's continued support to the National Society's tracing service received good media coverage and provided an opportunity to highlight the ICRC's key role in promoting the rights of families of the missing. Journalists, having undergone a thorough briefing on the topic by the ICRC, also reported on the opening of the archives at the International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen, Germany, to the public. The news had special significance not only for the survivors of Nazi persecution and the families of the victims but also for Second World War researchers.

As a contribution to the efforts of the government of Slovenia to bring to the fore the issue of children and women in armed conflict during its presidency of the EU, two Slovenian journalists took a field trip to Uganda organized by the ICRC, enabling them to report on practical aspects of the issue. Apart from increased coverage of IHL-related topics in the media, the trip resulted in a round-table discussion on children and war staged by the Foreign Affairs Ministry with the participation of the ICRC, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office and Slovenian NGOs.

### Teaching humanitarian values to schoolchildren

National authorities and National Societies, aided by the ICRC, further consolidated the integration of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme into national curricula. Priority for ICRC support was given to States committed to assuming full ownership of the programme. The testing phase of the programme in real school environments started in Estonia and Slovenia. Hungary and Romania included the programme in their school curricula. Representatives of governmental authorities and National Societies from Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia attended regional meetings in Budapest and Ohrid, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to map out their strategies and plans of action with clear objectives and timelines. Materials were translated into Estonian and Romanian.

### Promoting IHL among students

Partner universities received the latest publications on IHL, for both graduate and undergraduate courses, and support in organizing IHL events to encourage those who had yet to do so to incorporate IHL into their courses.

- 9 teams from the region participated in the Friedrich Born IHL moot court competition in Warsaw in November
- 3 teams from the region participated in the Jean Pictet IHL competition in El Escorial, Spain, in April
- a round-table focusing on the ICRC's study on customary IHL held in cooperation with the law faculty of Nicolae Titulescu University in Bucharest
- expert contributions and printed materials given to: the Annual Tallinn IHL Seminar organized by the Law Institute of the University of Tartu; the Baltic Summer Academy on IHL organized by the Lithuanian Red Cross; and the "Law better than war" university course in Bucharest

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The tracing and dissemination services of the 11 National Societies continued to benefit from ICRC technical and financial support for capacity building. The Croatian Red Cross received further extensive financial, technical and training support to boost the capacity of its tracing service, reflecting its increased responsibilities stemming from the transfer of data pertaining to missing persons in Croatia.

The regional network of disseminators was extended considerably, contributing to the improvement of communication and cooperation with the media and local authorities on Red Cross values, the emblem and IHL.

- ▶ 100 Croatian Red Cross branch staff attended 6 regional training sessions on dealing professionally with tracing procedures and processing cases relating to past conflict
- ▶ dissemination officers from 8 National Societies attended a regional round-table to discuss self-reliance and best practices
- ▶ 500 National Society staff and volunteers from 6 countries participated in 19 IHL dissemination events with ICRC support