

# SRI LANKA



The ICRC has worked in Sri Lanka since 1989. Operations focus on: helping clarify the fate of missing persons and supporting their families; visiting detainees and aiding the authorities in improving prison management; and providing backing for the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's family-links services. It also supports the armed forces' training in IHL.

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action **HIGH**

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ Families of missing persons met their economic, psychosocial and legal needs with help from ICRC-trained local partners, through a comprehensive support programme developed by the ICRC in response to the families' concerns.
- ▶ Prison authorities, with ICRC support, launched a pilot project aimed at improving medical screening processes and information management. They also drew on ICRC expertise in the design and construction of new prisons.
- ▶ The authorities approved national guidelines, drafted with the ICRC's input, on the management of human remains after emergencies. Forensic professionals shared best practices at an ICRC-organized regional conference.
- ▶ Conflict-affected households started or resumed livelihood activities using ICRC cash grants and livelihood input. Schoolchildren and vulnerable households had more clean water after ICRC infrastructure improvements.
- ▶ Sri Lanka announced its intention to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Troops and police forces bound for missions abroad learnt more about IHL and other applicable law at briefings.

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	3,572
Assistance	4,041
Prevention	727
Cooperation with National Societies	270
General	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,693</b>
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>531</i>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	89%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	25
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	104

PROTECTION	TOTAL
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	7
RCMs distributed	7
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)	136
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	15,475
Detainees visited and monitored individually	339
Number of visits carried out	96
Number of places of detention visited	47
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	9
RCMs distributed	2
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	5

ASSISTANCE	2016 Targets (up to)	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>		
Cash	Beneficiaries	5,200
Services and training	Beneficiaries	8,946
Services and training	Beneficiaries	11
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	5,600
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	8,052

## CONTEXT

People in areas affected by the armed conflict that ended in 2009 continued to feel its effects. Many of them remained without news of relatives who went missing during the conflict, and faced difficulties in meeting their emotional and economic needs, and in going through legal and administrative processes.

The authorities developed a plan for setting up mechanisms to address the needs of conflict-affected people, in line with an October 2015 resolution adopted by the UN Human Rights Council. They established a legal framework to create “certificates of absence” – which attest to the absence of missing persons, and facilitate legal and administrative procedures for their families, including applications for State assistance. They enacted legislation enabling the creation of an Office of Missing Persons, tasked with ascertaining the fate of missing persons and addressing the needs of their families. The authorities also began a consultative process to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a special court, and an office for reparations.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In 2016, the ICRC in Sri Lanka worked with and supported the authorities in addressing the humanitarian effects of past conflict. As thousands of people were still unaccounted for after the conflict, the ICRC maintained its dialogue with the authorities and other stakeholders responding to the needs of these persons’ families.

With technical input and encouragement from the ICRC, the authorities drafted and enacted legislation on the establishment of an Office of Missing Persons, tasked to clarify the fate of missing persons, and on the issuance of “certificates of absence” (see *Context*) to help ease the legal and administrative burdens on the families of the missing. The ICRC carried out a support programme for these families, based on the findings of a needs assessment it completed in November 2015. Through the programme, over 1,700 households in six districts obtained assistance for their economic, psychosocial, legal and financial needs from ICRC-trained local partners or local authorities. The ICRC continued to support authorities and forensic professionals in strengthening their capacity to manage and identify human remains: the health ministry published national guidelines on the management of human remains after emergencies, and work to establish a course in forensic anthropology, at a local university, continued.

Households affected by the past conflict, including those headed by women and rehabilitees – people arrested in relation to the past conflict who had been released after being held in rehabilitation centres – received ICRC support to begin or resume livelihood activities. They started small businesses with cash grants or farmed and fished using agricultural equipment and supplies donated by the ICRC. Schoolchildren and vulnerable households had better access to clean water after the ICRC improved facilities in schools and villages.

The ICRC continued to visit detainees, in accordance with its standard procedures, in prisons and places of temporary detention, and discussed its findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities. To support the authorities’ efforts to improve detainees’ treatment and living conditions, the ICRC organized seminars on prison management and maintenance, renovated prison infrastructure, and donated medical supplies and hygiene items for detainees. Together with the authorities, it launched a pilot project in two prisons aimed at improving medical screening

processes and information management; the authorities also drew on the lessons learnt from an ICRC project to improve prison maintenance that was carried out with a local university. The ICRC provided the authorities with technical input on prison design, in connection with government plans to move some prisons out of urban centres. The national task force on the legal and judicial causes of overcrowding – established in 2015 with ICRC support – discussed how to address these issues.

At ICRC-led workshops, briefings and other events, military personnel, troops and police forces bound for missions abroad, and diplomat trainees learnt more about humanitarian principles and IHL. The ICRC continued to discuss issues of humanitarian concern with the authorities and encouraged them to ratify IHL-related treaties. Sri Lanka announced its intention to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; Sri Lanka also ratified the Convention on Enforced Disappearance. With the ICRC’s encouragement, the national IHL committee continued to discuss the ratification of IHL-related treaties and the drafting of legislation to implement treaties already ratified.

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society and the ICRC offered family-links services, enabling people to restore contact with relatives, including migrants and detainees. The National Society continued to bolster its operational and managerial capacities, particularly in emergency response, with the ICRC’s help.

## CIVILIANS

### Families of missing persons meet their needs with help from local institutions

The authorities, members of civil society and the ICRC continued to discuss the humanitarian concerns remaining from the conflict, particularly the necessity of ascertaining the fate of missing persons and addressing their families’ concerns. Among those reported as missing were over 16,600 people whose families had lodged tracing requests with the National Society or the ICRC on their behalf.

Sri Lankan authorities took steps to address the needs of the families of missing persons. The government enacted legislation, drafted with technical support from the ICRC, to establish an office tasked to clarify the fate of missing persons, and assist their families. The ICRC also provided some expert advice during the drafting of legislation concerning the issuance of “certificates of absence” (see *Context*), which was passed by the Sri Lankan parliament.

To support government efforts to attend to the families’ needs, the ICRC submitted a confidential report to the authorities containing recommendations based on the findings of an island-wide needs assessment it conducted in 2015. In parallel, it drew from the results of the assessment to expand its comprehensive support programme for the families of the missing to six districts across the country. Thus, 1,713 families received assistance, for meeting their psychosocial and economic needs, from local partners trained or financed by the ICRC, or obtained legal, administrative or financial assistance from local authorities after being referred by the ICRC. Among them, 378 economically vulnerable families also received cash grants under an ICRC livelihood programme (see below).

### Authorities approve and publish guidelines on the management of human remains after emergencies

Authorities and forensic professionals worked to establish policies and procedures on the proper management of human remains after

disasters and other emergencies. The health ministry approved and published national guidelines – drafted by the College of Forensic Pathologists of Sri Lanka with ICRC support – on the handling of human remains after natural disasters.

At a regional conference organized by the ICRC, forensic professionals and pertinent authorities in the region shared best practices and discussed ways to improve policies concerning the management of human remains. Local medico-legal officers, and police officers added to their knowledge of crime scene management and forensic archaeology during ICRC-conducted workshops and at a course held at the Sri Lanka National Police Academy.

The University of Colombo designed modules for a programme in forensic anthropology and archaeology, and acquired specialized equipment to furnish its teaching laboratory, with ICRC support.

A committee, established by the justice ministry to recommend legislative reforms related to inquests of death, continued its work. It organized workshops with pertinent government stakeholders, for which the ICRC provided financial support.

### **Children have improved access to clean water in their schools**

Over 400 vulnerable households affected by previous conflict – including returnee and rehabilitee households, and households headed by women and disabled people – began or resumed livelihood activities, such as small businesses, with cash grants provided by the ICRC, sometimes through the National Society. Another 1,658 households (5,895 people) carried out fishing and farming activities using agricultural equipment and supplies from local organizations, which purchased the materials with ICRC cash assistance.

Some 4,752 children had improved access to safe water and sanitation facilities after the ICRC upgraded infrastructure in 13 schools. In five districts, 3,300 people had a better supply of clean water from water points and irrigation systems renovated or constructed by the ICRC.

### **People reconnect with relatives through family-links services**

Members of dispersed families, including migrants, contacted their relatives through family-links services offered by the National Society and the ICRC. Some 11,215 people bound for employment abroad learnt more about these services at National Society dissemination sessions, during which they were also briefed on ways to avoid losing contact with their relatives. Twenty-seven foreigners in Sri Lanka used ICRC travel documents to facilitate their resettlement in third countries.

The National Society reinforced its capacities in providing family-links services, particularly through local workshops and participation in a regional meeting on the humanitarian consequences of migration (see *Kuala Lumpur*) with ICRC support.

## **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

### **Detainees contact their relatives through family-links services**

Over 15,000 detainees in prisons and places of temporary detention were visited by the ICRC in accordance with its standard procedures; 339 of them were monitored individually. After these visits, the ICRC discussed its findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities. In particular, following visits to security detainees, including those detained in relation to past conflict, the ICRC's discussions with the authorities focused on helping ensure

that judicial guarantees were respected and that detainees' families were informed of their relatives' arrest. Subsequent meetings with the authorities followed up on confidential reports shared by the ICRC.

Detainees, including migrants, contacted their families through National Society and ICRC family-links services. Some 200 detainees received family visits; their relatives' transportation costs were covered by the ICRC. Former detainees or their families received certificates attesting to detention (134 in total), helping them facilitate legal processes. Some foreign detainees notified their embassies of their detention, with ICRC assistance.

### **Prison authorities host a regional conference on best practices in prison management**

Prison authorities and staff further developed their knowledge of issues related to improving detainees' treatment and living conditions with ICRC technical and material support. At ICRC briefings and training sessions, prison staff familiarized themselves with internationally recognized standards pertaining to arrest, search and interrogation in detention, and issues related to health care in prisons. Prison authorities hosted a regional conference for correctional managers, at which over 50 participants from 12 countries shared best practices and challenges relating to, *inter alia*, prison design and planning, the specific needs of women, and medical ethics.

A national taskforce – established by the authorities in 2015, with ICRC support – and stakeholders from the criminal justice system met to discuss the legal and judicial causes of overcrowding and ways to address them; the taskforce also began to tackle issues related to prison reform.

### **Authorities launch pilot project to improve medical screening and information management in prisons**

In view of government plans to relocate some prisons out of urban centres, prison officials and architectural teams sought the expertise of the ICRC and attended meetings to discuss its recommendations for improving living conditions in places of detention and enhancing the design of the new prisons. At a workshop organized by the ICRC, prison managers and technical staff discussed how to improve prison maintenance processes, drawing on lessons learnt from a project implemented by the ICRC with a local university. To learn more about prison construction, two engineers and one deputy commissioner attended a conference abroad with ICRC support.

After signing an agreement in July, the health ministry, the prison department and the ICRC launched a pilot project in two prisons to improve medical screening processes and information management, and broaden access to health care. Under the agreement, prison doctors and the authorities drafted standard operating procedures and medical screening forms at workshops, and consultation rooms in the pilot prisons were built and equipped.

More than 4,900 detainees in six prisons had better access to clean water and sanitation facilities after ICRC-backed maintenance and upgrades. Detainees in some prisons also benefited from health care provided by staff that received ICRC-donated medical items. Over 14,300 detainees received hygiene or recreational items, or other material assistance, to help them cope with their circumstances.

## ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

### **Troops bound for deployment abroad learn more about IHL**

During workshops, seminars and dissemination sessions, 1,287 military personnel and trainees deepened their understanding of humanitarian principles and IHL. Some 150 police personnel, including senior officers, added to their knowledge – through orientation sessions held at the Sri Lankan police college – of internationally recognized standards pertaining to arrests, detention and the use of force. At predeployment briefings, over 1,900 soldiers bound for peacekeeping missions learnt more about IHL in the context of peace-support operations, and about the role and mandate of the ICRC; around 180 police officers bound for foreign deployment were similarly briefed on IHL, international policing standards and the ICRC.

Thirty-seven naval commanders, 77 trainees and two representatives from the defence ministry added to their knowledge of the laws governing naval warfare; naval officers attended regional events on maritime security. Students from a diplomatic training institute under the foreign ministry attended sessions aimed at familiarizing them with IHL.

At a seminar, over 60 IHL instructors from the military familiarized themselves with new techniques and materials to incorporate in their courses. Four army officers learnt more about incorporating IHL in military doctrine, training and sanctions systems during training, workshops and seminars abroad, which they attended with ICRC support.

Academics added to their knowledge of IHL by participating in overseas trainings and seminars with ICRC support. Law students demonstrated their knowledge of IHL at moot court competition.

### **Members of the national IHL committee develop their knowledge at training abroad**

The authorities continued to engage in dialogue with the ICRC on specific issues and national legislative initiatives, and were urged to ratify and implement IHL-related treaties. In March 2016, Sri Lanka announced its intention to accede to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention; Sri Lanka ratified the Convention on Enforced Disappearance.

Members of the national IHL committee continued to discuss the ratification of IHL-related treaties, and the development of enabling legislation for treaties that had already been ratified, with ICRC encouragement. The committee translated the Geneva Conventions into national languages, with support from the ICRC, for the use of universities. A member of the committee attended a meeting of national IHL committees, and other government officials participated in IHL workshops and attended training abroad, all with the help of the ICRC.

During a regional workshop on IHL, held by the authorities and the ICRC, officials from pertinent ministries discussed best practices in drafting legislation, and issues and other issues related to the implementation of IHL-related treaties.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society strengthened its capacities in managing its operations, particularly restoring family links (see *Civilians*), and other emergency response capacities, with ICRC technical, financial and material support. Following floods in May, the National Society received financial and logistical support for its emergency-relief operations.

The National Society sought to strengthen the application of the Safer Access Framework in coordination with its branches across the country. This led to the drafting of action plans at 13 branches, the purchase of additional protective equipment, and more consistent use of uniforms with the red cross emblem. At regional round-tables and workshops, National Society personnel shared best practices in applying the framework. Over 560 volunteers took a basic first-aid certification exam and 58 instructors attended a refresher course. The National Society continued to develop a localized first-aid handbook.

Community members, students, the authorities and National Society volunteers familiarized themselves with the Fundamental Principles and the Movement at dissemination and training sessions conducted by the National Society with ICRC support.

The revised statutes of the National Society and a draft Red Cross Act, prepared with ICRC technical support, awaited approval by the pertinent authorities; the National Society and the ICRC worked towards drafting a preamble to the act with support from the International Federation.

Movement components met regularly to exchange information and coordinate their activities.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>					
<b>RCMs and other means of family contact</b>			UAMs/SC		
RCMs collected		7			
RCMs distributed		7			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		543	60	43	98
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		107			
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)		136			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		16,672	847	528	1,509
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		107			
<b>Unaccompanied minors (UAMs)/separated children (SC), including demobilized child soldiers</b>			Girls		Demobilized children
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		15	7		
<b>Documents</b>					
People to whom travel documents were issued		34			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>					
<b>ICRC visits</b>			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		15,475	846	36	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		339	16		2
Detainees newly registered		116	11		1
Number of visits carried out		96			
Number of places of detention visited		47			
<b>RCMs and other means of family contact</b>					
RCMs collected		9			
RCMs distributed		2			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		5			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		203			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		134			

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Cash	Beneficiaries	8,946	3,748	2,277
Services and training	Beneficiaries	11	2	
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	8,052	4,026	4,026
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection programme)</b>				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	14,323	804	10
Cash	Beneficiaries	46		
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	4,900	686	
<b>Health</b>				
Visits carried out by health staff		17		
Places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	13		
Health facilities supported in places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	2		