

bangkok (regional)



Since first establishing a presence in Bangkok in 1979 to support its operation in Cambodia, the ICRC has worked to promote the ratification and implementation of humanitarian treaties and the integration of IHL into military training in all the countries covered. It strives to raise awareness of issues of humanitarian concern among all sectors of society and supports the National Societies of the region in developing their dissemination and tracing activities. The ICRC continues to visit detainees of concern in Cambodia and Thailand and to work towards protecting and assisting vulnerable population groups. The ICRC prosthetic/orthotic project in Cambodia contributes to meeting the need for affordable, good-quality prostheses.

COVERING

Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand, Viet Nam

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,270
Assistance	2,696
Prevention	1,488
Cooperation with National Societies	767
General	-

► **7,221**

of which: Overheads 441

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	86%
---------------------------	-----

PERSONNEL

20	expatriates
60	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- expanded detention-related activities in Cambodia and Thailand
- monitored the humanitarian situation of the civilian population affected by the ongoing violence in southern Thailand
- provided financial assistance for the treatment of 128 weapon-wounded patients along the Thai-Myanmar border
- in cooperation with the Lao Red Cross, improved water and sanitation conditions for displaced minority populations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- remained a major provider of physical rehabilitation services in the region

CONTEXT

Violent incidents continued to occur almost daily in southern Thailand, with civilians increasingly suffering the effects. According to media reports, nearly 1,000 people died and more than 1,800 were injured during the year as a result of the violence, the majority of them civilians. The Thai authorities extended the Emergency Decree, deployed additional troops to the area and arrested suspected members of armed groups. General elections took place in December.

The conflict in Myanmar continued to cause a spillover effect in border areas of Thailand.

In Cambodia, communal election results confirmed the dominance of the Cambodian People's Party. After delays, the Khmer Rouge trial made significant progress and five of the most prominent former Khmer Rouge leaders still alive were arrested.

The Lao and Thai authorities concluded a bilateral agreement whereby the Lao People's Democratic Republic would take back Hmong people from Thailand whose Lao nationality had been established.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total		Total	Women	Children
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)¹			CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM²		
Detainees visited	9,381		<i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>		
Detainees visited and monitored individually	381		Essential household items <i>Beneficiaries</i>		
		<i>of whom females</i>	9,920		
		<i>of whom minors</i>			
Number of visits carried out	54		Water, sanitation and habitat projects <i>Beneficiaries</i>		
Number of places of detention visited	33		7,540	7%	12%
RESTORING FAMILY LINKS			WOUNDED AND SICK³		
<i>Red Cross messages (RCMs) and reunifications</i>			<i>Physical rehabilitation</i>		
RCMs collected	53		Patients receiving services <i>Patients</i>		
RCMs distributed	37		10,841	1,337	1,030
DOCUMENTS ISSUED			Prostheses delivered <i>Units</i>		
People to whom travel documents were issued	14		1,793	129	38
			Orthoses delivered <i>Units</i>		
			1,657	287	617

1. Cambodia and Thailand

2. All figures include Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic

3. Cambodia

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued to monitor the violence in southern Thailand and intensified its contacts with government representatives and educational, religious and community leaders in order to inform them about the ICRC's mandate and activities and enhance the protection of the civilian population. Delegates carried out visits to people detained in connection with the violence in the southern provinces to check on their treatment and living conditions. They submitted confidential reports on their findings to the authorities and discussed authorization to visit places of temporary detention under the responsibility of the security forces.

On the Thai-Myanmar border, the ICRC monitored the situation of civilians and the spillover effects of the armed conflict in Myanmar and pursued contacts with armed groups present in the area in order to promote respect for IHL. It assisted more weapon-wounded patients from Myanmar than in 2006 and continued to participate in coordination meetings with other humanitarian organizations working in the area.

The ICRC expanded its visits to security detainees in Cambodia to monitor their treatment and conditions of detention and to report confidentially to the authorities on its findings. It was able to visit additional places of detention thanks to increased staff. For persistent problems that required an urgent response, the ICRC, in cooperation with the prison authorities, built new wells and carried out other ad hoc repairs to improve ventilation and access to drinking water.

The ICRC continued to play a major role in the provision of physical rehabilitation services in Cambodia, supporting two regional centres and the factory that produced prosthetic/orthotic components for the entire country.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the ICRC pursued its efforts, in cooperation with the Lao Red Cross, to monitor the situation and improve the living conditions of Hmong populations.

ICRC support was maintained to the various training programmes run by the region's armed forces. Promotion of IHL among the authorities, members of the media, NGOs and academic circles also continued.

The ICRC pursued programmes to strengthen the capacities of the region's National Societies, particularly in the areas of IHL promotion and restoring family links.

CIVILIANS

Protecting and assisting vulnerable civilians

In southern Thailand, the ICRC further developed its network of contacts with local communities, religious leaders and education authorities and familiarized them with its protection mandate and activities. Thanks to numerous field trips to the area, the delegation gained a better understanding of the behaviour of weapon bearers and the situation of those affected by the ongoing violence. The improved knowledge helped the ICRC to strengthen dialogue with its contacts. The ICRC also assessed support given to people affected by the violence and gave some assistance to help children return to school.

The ICRC continued to monitor the situation of Myanmar citizens seeking refuge in Thailand.

Civilians were able to restore and maintain contact with relatives through the RCM and tracing services. Individuals of various nationalities were issued with travel documents, enabling them to leave their host countries legally.

- ▶ 23 RCMs collected from and 25 RCMs distributed to civilians
- ▶ 14 people issued with an ICRC travel document

The ICRC monitored the living conditions of resettled ethnic minorities in the eastern region of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Following assessments by the Lao Red Cross and the ICRC, vulnerable Hmong groups in three villages in the former Xaysomboun area (now Vientiane province) benefited from a comprehensive water, sanitation and hygiene-promotion project. In addition, a small group of Hmong who had left the remote area where they were living received basic household items.

- ▶ 670 people benefited from water and sanitation projects
- ▶ 800 people received essential household items

Khmer archives

Between 1975 and 2004, the ICRC had compiled records of family members separated as a result of the past conflict in Cambodia. With the ICRC receiving tracing requests from Cambodians abroad and having gained access to other organizations' records, these archives proved invaluable in shedding light on the fate of missing persons. Therefore, the ICRC decided to preserve these archives digitally, a process that was completed in November 2007.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Thailand

ICRC delegates visited places of detention run by the Department of Corrections to monitor the treatment and conditions of detention of people arrested in relation to the violence in the south. Their findings and recommendations were discussed with the directors of the centres and included in a confidential report handed to the relevant authorities.

Meetings took place with Royal Thai Police commissioners regarding visits to people detained under police authority. As a result, the ICRC gained access to one temporary place of detention, the Yala Police Academy.

- 261 detainees visited and monitored individually (including 1 minor) and 89 newly registered (including 1 minor), during 24 visits to 10 places of detention
- 30 RCMs collected from and 12 RCMs distributed to detainees
- 18 detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC support

Cambodia

With the help of additional staff in Cambodia, the ICRC increased the number of visits to detainees, including to places not visited in the past, to monitor their treatment and conditions of detention and report confidentially to the authorities on its findings. The ICRC also visited the new detention facility of the Khmer Rouge Trial. Inmates' general health and access to water improved after the construction of a rainwater harvesting system, the repair and replacement of water filters and taps, the administration of scabies treatment, the cleaning and repair of sewage and drainage systems, the construction of latrines, and other ad hoc repairs to improve ventilation, kitchen equipment and infrastructure. All detainees visited received hygiene products, including specific items for female detainees.

- 9,120 detainees visited, of whom 120 monitored individually (including 1 female) and 11 newly registered, during 30 visits to 23 places of detention
- 6,870 detainees benefited from water/sanitation/habitat projects

WOUNDED AND SICK

Physical rehabilitation

According to official estimates, there were some 60,000 disabled people in Cambodia, among them 36,000 mine victims. People in need of artificial limbs and physiotherapy had access to these services in two regional physical rehabilitation centres in Battambang and Kompong Speu, both directly supported by the ICRC. The Cambodian Red Cross Society, with ICRC support, identified disabled people from remote villages and assisted

them in obtaining transport to and treatment in the centres. Prosthetic/orthotic components for the whole country were manufactured at the national component factory in Phnom Penh, managed jointly with the ICRC.

- 10,841 patients (including 1,337 women and 1,030 children) received services at 2 ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres
- 507 new patients (including 40 women and 13 children) fitted with prostheses and 606 (including 122 women and 197 children) fitted with orthoses
- 1,793 prostheses (including 129 for women, 38 for children and 1,562 for mine victims), 1,657 orthoses (287 for women, 617 for children and 41 for mine victims), 3,840 crutches and 602 wheelchairs delivered

The prosthetic/orthotic team carried out 46 field trips of four to five days each from Battambang and 175 trips of one or half a day each from Kompong Speu to assess the needs of amputees who found it difficult to travel. During the trips, the teams:

- assessed the condition and needs of 9,441 patients
- repaired 3,977 prostheses and 558 wheelchairs
- delivered 1,030 pairs of crutches and 380 wheelchairs
- arranged appointments at the Battambang or Kompong Speu centres for 834 patients

AUTHORITIES

Government representatives from Viet Nam, with the ICRC's support, attended the Second Universal Meeting of National IHL Committees held in Geneva, Switzerland, which focused on legal measures and mechanisms to prevent disappearances, to clarify the fate of missing persons and to assist their families.

The Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Lao Red Cross, organized the largest ever seminar on IHL in the country in April, with the support of UNDP and the ICRC. The seminar brought together some 150 participants, including representatives of various ministries and law students.

Government representatives from Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand attended a regional symposium in China to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1977 Additional Protocols (see *Beijing regional*).

In Thailand, members of the authorities and the armed forces participated in a workshop on the implementation of IHL co-organized by the ICRC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The workshop presented an opportunity for the ICRC to work with the Thai authorities towards the further implementation of IHL in Thailand, where few pieces of legislation implementing IHL existed.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The armed forces in the region continued to integrate IHL into their training programmes with ICRC support.

Officers from the Royal Thai Armed Forces (RTAF) preparing to serve as military observers with the UN participated in an IHL dissemination session. Participants in courses for UN military

observers at the RTAF Peace Support Operations Centre also attended presentations on IHL and the ICRC's role and mandate. During the Thai-US 10-day regional training exercise, Cobra Gold, participants learned about the ICRC's role and activities through peacekeeping and peace-support simulations. The director of the RTAF's Army Training Command met the ICRC regularly to discuss the integration of IHL into the training institution's curricula.

Owing to the high turnover of commanding officers and to procedural issues, it was difficult for the ICRC to develop contacts with members of the Thai security forces based in the south. The ICRC met the chief of the Royal Thai Police to discuss future IHL dissemination for police posted in southern Thailand. The ICRC was unable to contact the armed groups operating in southern Thailand.

The Viet Nam People's Army conducted a train-the-trainer course for IHL instructors with ICRC support.

Leaders of armed groups from Myanmar present in Thailand were periodically briefed on ICRC activities and the need to respect and promote IHL.

- ▶ 2 officers from the Thai military and 1 officer from the Viet Nam military attended the regional training seminar on peace-support operations held in Malaysia (see *Kuala Lumpur regional*)
- ▶ a senior officer from the Thai military attended the Senior Workshop on International Rules governing Military Operations co-hosted by the ICRC and the Swiss army in Geneva, Switzerland

CIVIL SOCIETY

Journalists throughout the region learned about the ICRC's activities by participating in relevant events and through press releases and leaflets, while other publications for the general public were translated into local languages and distributed.

In Thailand, the first basic textbook on IHL was being written by a lecturer from Thammasat University, with the ICRC's support. The drafting of model IHL syllabuses for universities continued in Thailand and Viet Nam.

- ▶ 40 teachers and members of the Thai education authorities participated in a three-day teacher-training seminar on the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme organized jointly by the Thai Red Cross, the Ministry of Education and the ICRC
- ▶ in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, 58 participants from academic circles and the authorities attended an IHL seminar co-organized by the Lao Red Cross and the ICRC

In order to enhance the ICRC's activities for civilians along the Thai-Myanmar border and in southern Thailand through a better understanding of the local context, NGOs and the ICRC maintained links with each other and discussed relevant issues on a regular basis. In southern Thailand, the ICRC developed its contacts with influential members of the community in order to improve understanding of IHL and the ICRC's specific mandate.

- ▶ in southern Thailand, 98 religious and community leaders attended 3 information sessions on the ICRC's activities and mandate and humanitarian principles, with a similar event organized for 57 teachers from the main Islamic school in southern Thailand

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

With ICRC technical and financial support, the region's National Societies enhanced their capacities to promote the Fundamental Principles and the basic rules of IHL. They continued to produce dissemination material in their respective languages, with the ICRC lending its support for translation, editing and printing.

The ICRC's working relationship with the Thai Red Cross was strengthened in order to improve dissemination to the media of key messages about the Movement and the ICRC's specific mandate.

Operational cooperation between the ICRC and the Lao Red Cross continued to benefit vulnerable minority communities (see *Civilians*).

With the ICRC's guidance and support, staff and volunteers of the Red Cross of Viet Nam and the Cambodian Red Cross Society implemented outreach programmes to assist disabled people from remote villages in obtaining treatment.

The Cambodian Red Cross and the Red Cross of Viet Nam worked closely with the ICRC to foster contacts and promote IHL with their respective armed forces.

With ICRC support:

- ▶ the Thai Red Cross Society organized a consultation meeting for the region's National Societies on the future implementation of family-links activities
- ▶ the Red Cross of Viet Nam prepared a draft emblem law that was submitted to the parliamentary committee for an initial consultation
- ▶ the Red Cross of Viet Nam organized family-links training for its staff, to discuss tracing activities and enhance the skills of tracing officers
- ▶ the Cambodian Red Cross carried out mine-risk education activities focusing on awareness raising, data collection and emergency assistance and organized 277 dissemination sessions on the Movement's Fundamental Principles attended by some 2,500 people, including government officials, teachers and students
- ▶ the Cambodian Red Cross organized its annual tracing workshop to discuss strategies and share experiences
- ▶ the Lao Red Cross organized IHL sessions attended by some 700 government officials, members of the armed forces and police, and members of the public