

SRI LANKA



ICRC delegation ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	2,757
Assistance	918
Prevention	905
Cooperation with National Societies	859
General	-

► **5,439**

of which: Overheads 332

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	87%
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PERSONNEL

Expatriates	15
National staff (daily workers not included)	89

KEY POINTS

In 2012, the ICRC:

- ▶ despite some access restrictions, individually monitored 636 detainees, while facilitating family visits for 1,588
- ▶ offered its services to assist the government in addressing the needs of families of missing persons, including through the establishment of a centralized database and a related national mechanism
- ▶ with the National Society, expanded its micro-economic initiatives project in Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts, enabling more returnee households to improve their income-generating capacities
- ▶ with the National Society, supported a national steering committee in the development of a master plan and a set of guidelines for the management of dead bodies in disaster situations
- ▶ encouraged interest and participation in discussions on IHL and its relevance in post-conflict Sri Lanka among the authorities and civil society circles by co-organizing national and regional events
- ▶ agreed with the Sri Lanka Police Department to jointly review the police's standing orders on the appropriate use of force, with the aim of bringing them in line with internationally recognized standards

The ICRC has worked in Sri Lanka since 1989. Operations focus on: work to protect and assist civilians affected by the past armed conflict; visiting detainees and enabling family members to remain in touch; supporting the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society in boosting the economic security of IDPs, returnees and resident communities; improving access to physical rehabilitation facilities; and supporting military training in IHL.

CONTEXT

With macro-economic growth and restored stability after the end of the armed conflict in 2009, Sri Lanka continued on its path to recovery. The closure of Menik Farm in Vavuniya district in September marked the end of major displacement in the country, with IDPs returning to their areas of origin – a large-scale undertaking that required the allocation of massive resources, the rapid rebuilding of essential government services, the demining of large stretches of land, and the coordination of different aid providers. Despite these efforts, many returnees had still not established their livelihoods, and access to basic services was poor. Several thousand people remained unaccounted for, leaving their relatives in a constant state of anguish about their fate.

By end-2012, the number of people held in relation to the past conflict significantly decreased to about 1,300, both in places of temporary and permanent detention and in rehabilitation centres.

The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), appointed by the Sri Lankan president, published its report on essential measures required for post-conflict reconciliation and recovery, covering various issues of humanitarian concern. In response, the government released a plan of action in July rearranging the 285 recommendations of the LLRC report into 96, grouped under five headings, namely: International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights, Land Return and Resettlement, Restitution/Compensatory Relief, and Reconciliation.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

Despite the government's scrutiny of and restrictions on independent humanitarian action, the ICRC continued to contribute to addressing the consequences of the former armed conflict. Whenever possible, it operated in partnership with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, which benefited from ICRC financial, material and technical support to develop its emergency and recovery response capacities, particularly in its northern and eastern branches.

The ICRC visited detainees arrested and held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, monitoring their treatment and living conditions and reporting findings and recommendations confidentially to the detaining authorities. While the vast majority of visits were conducted according to the ICRC's standard procedures, private interviews with detainees were not permitted during a visit to one prison under the responsibility of the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms (MRPR), which led to the suspension of visits to its facilities. As discussions took place to remedy the problem, ICRC activities for people held in places of detention under the authority of the Terrorism Investigation Department (TID) continued, with inmates in some of these places enjoying improved living

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Red Cross messages (RCMs)				
RCMs collected		145	UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs distributed		166		
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons				
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		335	Women	Minors
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		36		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		16,090	823	1,574
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers				
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		32	Girls	Demobilized children
Documents				
People to whom travel documents were issued		97		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
ICRC visits				
Detainees visited		636	Women	Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually		636	15	
Detainees newly registered		161	7	
Number of visits carried out		30		
Number of places of detention visited		12		
Restoring family links				
RCMs collected		150		
RCMs distributed		78		
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		61		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1,588		
Detainees released and transferred/repatriated by/via the ICRC		1		
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		1,079		

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

conditions thanks to ICRC material support. Family visits helped raise the spirits of detainees, including those held in places affected by the suspension of ICRC visits and in rehabilitation centres.

The National Society/ICRC continued to offer tracing services to people seeking to restore contact with relatives, including migrants. They also supported the Health Ministry-chaired national steering committee in completing a master plan on the management of dead bodies during disasters.

The ICRC continued to remind the government of the plight of the families of the missing and to encourage them to establish a centralized database and a national mechanism to address the issue. It stood ready to help the government implement some of the recommendations of the LLRC report, particularly those concerning the needs of families of the missing and detainees arrested in relation to the past conflict. A study tour and a draft concept paper helped advance such efforts.

In addition to offering its services to help address residual humanitarian needs, the ICRC held/co-organized meetings and events, such as the 21st South Asia Teaching Session on IHL (SATS), to encourage the authorities and civil society representatives to participate in ongoing discussions on IHL in post-conflict Sri Lanka and to advance IHL implementation. Such initiatives, however, produced limited results. Nevertheless, the armed and police forces took steps to integrate IHL and internationally recognized standards on the use of force into their respective training and operations.

National Society/ICRC teams supported the early recovery of communities still struggling with the effects of the former armed conflict. Vulnerable households in Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts increased their incomes with the help of cash grants and business management training, while communities in Ampara, Anuradhapura and Jaffna accessed clean drinking water thanks to

well-disinfection projects conducted with the Health Ministry and, in some cases, with community members. People living in Jaffna district continued to benefit from basic medical/health services provided by National Society-run mobile clinics. By year-end, the ICRC wound up support to these clinics, as Health Ministry facilities had resumed their services.

The Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation (JJCDR) continued to provide services to people with conflict-related disabilities and worked towards self-sufficiency with ICRC technical and material support. Disabled patients in the south had their treatment at the Navajeevana physical rehabilitation centre paid for by the ICRC.

CIVILIANS

Many former IDPs who had returned to their places of residence or resettled elsewhere remained vulnerable, with little means to restart livelihood activities. Damaged or neglected infrastructure, such as water supply systems, and lack of proper health care facilities made it more difficult for them to cope with the situation.

The Sri Lankan Red Cross and the ICRC worked together to address the needs of vulnerable returnee communities in the northern and eastern provinces. With ICRC material, technical and training support, National Society staff in these provincial branches boosted their capacities to respond to emergencies, to assess needs, to follow up and monitor livelihood activities, notably micro-economic initiatives, and to manage and maintain water sources, thus ensuring the smooth implementation and sustainability of current and future recovery projects.

The pilot micro-economic initiatives project launched in the Vavuniya district in 2011 continued, with over 157 heads of household learning how to run their own businesses with the help of business management courses (benefiting 471 people). A total

Main figures and indicators		ASSISTANCE	Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)					
Cash ¹	Beneficiaries	76	80%		
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	471	87%		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	108	50%		
Health					
Health centres supported	Structures	1			
Average catchment population		13,698			
Consultations	Patients	11,548			
	<i>of which curative</i>			3,053	6,144
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)					
Essential household items ¹	Beneficiaries	527			
WOUNDED AND SICK					
Physical rehabilitation					
Centres supported	Structures	1			
Patients receiving services	Patients	1,228	346	53	
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	123	27		
Prostheses delivered	Units	328	77	9	
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	102			
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	92	29	17	
Orthoses delivered	Units	220	67	29	
Number of patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	689	196	67	
Crutches delivered	Units	161			
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	31			

1. Owing to operational and management constraints, figures presented in this table and in the narrative part of this report may not reflect all activities carried out during the reporting period

of 23 of these heads of household, mostly women or disabled persons, received one-off cash grants to kick-start such endeavours and support themselves and their families, benefiting 76 people. Similarly, in the Mullaitivu district, a first batch of 31 heads of household received cash grants to restart livelihood activities.

Communities in Ampara and Anuradhapura districts and Jaffna peninsula benefited from clean drinking water after the disinfection of 60 wells in the area, sometimes with their help. Two public health inspectors from the Health Ministry actively participated in training in how to properly manage and maintain these water sources.

In Jaffna peninsula, the progressive phase-out of ICRC support to National Society mobile health clinics, which assisted nearly 11,600 people through 170 visits, concluded, as patients could already access the Health Ministry's basic health care services.

Families seek information on missing relatives

Thousands of people had lost touch with relatives during the former conflict and in its immediate aftermath, and many such cases reported to the ICRC remained unresolved. Sri Lankans in the country, as well as migrants abroad, continued to request help in tracing relatives with whom they had lost contact or who were unaccounted for, submitting tracing requests to the ICRC in Sri Lanka, to National Society branches or to National Societies/ICRC delegations abroad.

To enable the National Society to collect and respond to such requests efficiently, volunteers from five branches in the northern and eastern provinces attended training courses. These branches also received support in integrating family-links services into their contingency planning.

With the release of the LLRC report and the corresponding plan of action (see *Context*), the ICRC offered its services to the government to help it implement the recommendations aimed at addressing the needs of families of missing persons. Government

representatives also continued to be reminded of the plight of the families of the missing and encouraged to create a national mechanism to address their needs and a centralized system for data collection. During a study tour, officials from the Ministry of Defence learnt more about how such needs were addressed in Nepal. In addition, the defence secretary received a concept paper, drafted by the ICRC in cooperation with the Chief National Intelligence Office, on the creation of a national mechanism for missing persons. Working-level meetings took place with relevant officials regarding improvement of data-sharing and cross-matching.

With National Society/ICRC support, the Health Ministry-chaired national steering committee set up in 2011 completed a master plan and set of guidelines for the management of dead bodies after disaster situations, which were awaiting validation. To help build national capacities, forensic specialists and officers from the Health Ministry participated in various events, such as the Asia-Pacific Meeting of Medico-Legal Institutes and Agencies. Moreover, two forensic doctors honed their skills in managing human remains at a training course in Geneva, Switzerland, while another took a month-long course in forensic anthropology in Coimbra, Portugal.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

In a number of facilities, detainees held in relation to the former armed conflict and under the Prevention of Terrorism Act received visits from ICRC delegates who assessed their treatment and living conditions according to internationally recognized standards. Rehabilitation centres, however, had remained inaccessible to the organization since March 2010. Following an unprecedented refusal in March by the authorities in one prison to allow delegates to talk to detainees in private (part of the ICRC's standard procedures), the ICRC suspended visits to all people held in prisons under the responsibility of the MRPR. While discussions to remedy the problem did not reach a conclusion, detainees in places under the authority of the TID continued to receive ICRC visits conducted according to the organization's standard procedures, with 636 monitored individually.

Following visits, ICRC delegates submitted confidential reports to the relevant detaining authorities containing their findings, including on procedural safeguards, and related recommendations. Such dialogue led to the authorities making improvements to daily meals, hygiene facilities and library access in some places of detention. For example, with the provision of ICRC materials and equipment, inmates in Boossa, the largest TID facility in the country, enjoyed access to better quality drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene facilities and a new carpentry workshop.

Although the Ministry of Justice received technical support from an ICRC external consultant in revising the Prison Ordinance and its Rules, there was no progress regarding the implementation of the recommendations in the ICRC's 2011 report and the planned systemic projects in sites under the MRPR aimed at tackling the causes and consequences of severe overcrowding – the main humanitarian issue affecting inmates in all prisons.

Despite these limitations, some assistance was still extended to detainees and their families. Over 1,500 inmates under the responsibility of the TID, as well as that of the MRPR before the suspension of visits in March, benefited from clothing and hygiene items, while some 2,400 eased the monotony of their incarceration with ICRC-provided recreational items, including books and indoor/outdoor games. Disabled detainees served their sentences with more dignity with the help of mobility aids, such as crutches.

While some inmates maintained contact with their families through RCMs, 1,588 detainees under MRPR and TID responsibility, including some in rehabilitation centres, benefited from visits from relatives every two months. Transport costs covered by the ICRC helped families visiting their relatives in detention and released detainees returning home to save their often meagre resources for other essentials, such as health care or education.

WOUNDED AND SICK

Some of the people wounded as a result of the past conflict, either during the fighting or afterwards by explosive remnants of war, had had limbs amputated and required physical rehabilitation.

A total of 1,228 patients benefited from various services provided by the ICRC-supported JJCDR, the only longstanding physical rehabilitation centre in the north. This included the production of 328 prostheses, 220 orthoses, and other assistive devices.

With a view to achieving financial sustainability, the JJCDR took steps to diversify its fundraising capacity with ICRC support and as a result, managed to continue its outreach programme independently. It also raised the public's awareness of its services through ICRC-sponsored promotional materials for its 25th anniversary celebration. Training abroad for a physiotherapy assistant, initially planned for 2012, had already taken place in 2011.

As most humanitarian actors active in physical rehabilitation focused their services in the north, 69 amputees in the south had their treatment at the Navajeevana centre, a local NGO in the south dedicated to helping disabled people, paid for by the ICRC. With the resettlement of beneficiaries (see *Context*), the ICRC-supported National Society ambulance service for the severely disabled in Vavuniya was terminated.

AUTHORITIES

Influential actors, such as government ministers, and the ICRC pursued discussions on remaining humanitarian priorities and the organization's post-conflict activities. During bilateral meetings, the authorities received the ICRC's offer of services to support them in implementing some of the LLRC report's recommendations of a humanitarian nature, particularly in relation to the needs of the families of the missing and detainees held in connection with the former armed conflict.

Government officials, army officers and civil society representatives took part in various events aimed at further raising their awareness of and contributing to the ongoing academic discussions on IHL, and at encouraging the implementation of several treaties through domestic law. Representatives of the Attorney General's Office attended an IHL workshop co-organized with a local law school (see *Civil society*), while high-ranking government officials participated in regional IHL events (see *Iran, Islamic Republic of and New Delhi*). Held for the first time in the country, the 21st SATS, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of External Affairs, brought together representatives from the region to share their experiences in ratifying and implementing IHL. This event welcomed the formation of a SATS alumni network aimed at working with the national IHL committee in promoting IHL throughout the country and the launch of the customary IHL rules translated into Sinhalese and Tamil. The national IHL committee began a similar initiative to translate the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

As part of efforts to ensure the sustainability and quality of the army's IHL training, 85 IHL instructors improved their capacities to teach the topic during ICRC workshops, while 31 army and 6 navy officers and 3 members of the Special Task Force enhanced their IHL knowledge at courses organized with the army's Directorate of Human Rights and IHL. High-ranking officers also attended an IHL workshop co-organized with a local law school (see *Civil society*), an IHL training session in San Remo and an international workshop on IHL and military operations in Malaysia (see *International law and cooperation*). The army showed interest in further discussing its role in law enforcement.

At the army's request, over 1,700 personnel departing on UN peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Lebanon attended briefings where they enhanced their knowledge of their legal obligations, the humanitarian situation in their countries of deployment and the ICRC's role.

The police force took steps to integrate the appropriate use of force and firearms in law enforcement, particularly during search, seizure, arrest and detention, into its training through workshops for over 2,600 police officers, including those tasked with teaching the subject to colleagues. The Sri Lanka Police Department concluded an agreement with the ICRC, providing the framework to review its standing orders on the appropriate use of force, and set up a steering committee for this purpose.

CIVIL SOCIETY

Local media and relevant actors of influence continued to draw on information and documentation provided by the ICRC through articles, seminars, conferences and field trips, to promote priority humanitarian topics. Journalists who participated in a study tour in Nepal wrote about the similar humanitarian issues faced by families of the missing in Sri Lanka.

With the aim of stimulating interest in and academic debate on IHL-related issues in the post-conflict environment, a local law school organized, with ICRC support, a two-day training workshop for 26 lecturers/instructors from universities, the armed forces and the Attorney General's Office. The participants learnt about recent IHL developments and addressed related topics during panel discussions. Briefings and participation in various events helped raise understanding of IHL and the ICRC within the academic community. Teams of students tested their IHL skills at national or regional moot court competitions (see *Bangladesh* and *Beijing*).

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Amid the government's continuing scrutiny of humanitarian actors, the Sri Lankan Red Cross remained the ICRC's main operational partner. With ICRC financial, technical and material support, it responded to the needs of vulnerable communities by restoring family links, providing health care and supporting income-generation and water and habitat projects (see *Civilians*). Training in first aid and search and rescue helped disaster response teams throughout the country strengthen their emergency preparedness. They included 155 volunteers trained in the newly opened Anuradhapura training centre, established with ICRC support. The Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu branches also benefited from equipment and the refurbishment of vehicles.

ICRC-trained National Society volunteers helped promote humanitarian principles and the Movement to over 12,000 people through dissemination sessions and community activities.

The National Society continued the revision of its statutes with ICRC technical support and coordinated activities with Movement partners.