



buenos aires (regional)

The ICRC regional delegation in Buenos Aires, established in 1975, visits security detainees in Chile and Paraguay and monitors the situation in selected prisons in Brazil. It focuses on promoting the incorporation of IHL into national legislation, into the doctrine, manuals and training programmes of the armed forces and into the curricula of academic institutions. Similarly, it works with police forces on the integration of human rights law applicable to the use of force in situations of violence. The ICRC promotes awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles among the authorities, the media and the general public. It also reinforces the capacities of the region's National Societies to respond to situations of internal strife and social unrest.

COVERING

Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	616
Assistance	38
Prevention	1,766
Cooperation with National Societies	615
General	-

► **3,036**

of which: Overheads 185

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	93%
---------------------------	-----

PERSONNEL

3	expatriates
23	national staff (daily workers not included)

KEY POINTS

In 2007, the ICRC:

- ▶ assisted Brazilian Red Cross branches working in violence-prone neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro
- ▶ visited security detainees in Chile and Paraguay
- ▶ submitted to the Paraguayan authorities a comprehensive survey on health care in prisons
- ▶ launched programmes in Paraguay and extended programmes in Brazil promoting IHL and relevant humanitarian norms among the armed and police forces
- ▶ organized with the Argentinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs a regional meeting of experts on forensic medicine to define standardized protocols for the identification of human remains in emergency situations
- ▶ supported the Chilean authorities in the establishment of an ante- and post-mortem database to facilitate the identification of human remains

CONTEXT

Social and economic disparities remained a major destabilizing factor in the region. Land distribution issues and indigenous grievances prompted recurrent bouts of violence in Brazil, Chile and Paraguay. Inadequate living conditions in many of the region's prisons also contributed to episodes of violence, feeding a vicious circle in which increased violence led to more arrests which in turn led to further overcrowding.

In Brazil, urban violence, especially in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, continued to take its toll. In deprived neighbourhoods, clashes between law enforcement agents and armed gangs, or among armed gangs, often had serious humanitarian consequences for the resident population, owing to the use of heavy weaponry. One notable example was the standoff between police forces and armed gangs in May and June in the Complexo do Alemão, a *favela* (shantytown) of some 200,000 inhabitants in Rio de Janeiro. Over a period of almost 60 days, some 1,300 police officers battled armed gangs, leaving 50 people dead and scores injured. In another Rio *favela*, Correa, clashes between rival gangs forced the displacement of some 240 people, mostly women, children and the elderly. The Brazilian government, increasingly concerned by the magnitude of the problem, launched a training programme to improve the efficiency of its security forces, while also trying to tackle the socio-economic roots of the problem.

Governments in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay took a fresh look at past events, in particular the forced disappearance of thousands of people in the years of military dictatorship. Most of them passed legislation paving the way for the prosecution of the perpetrators, investigation of the fate of missing persons and some form of compensation for their relatives.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

	Total
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)¹	
Detainees visited	44
Detainees visited and monitored individually	44
<i>of whom females</i>	7
Number of visits carried out	23
Number of places of detention visited	11

1. Chile and Paraguay

ICRC ACTION

The ICRC continued to address the humanitarian consequences of past conflict, especially in connection with forced disappearances in Argentina and Chile, and of other situations of violence, namely in Brazil, Chile and Paraguay. It focused its activities in these countries on landless farmers (Brazil and Paraguay), indigenous groups (Brazil and Chile) and residents of marginalized urban slums (Brazil).

To address the humanitarian consequences of Brazil's urban violence, the ICRC took a number of tangible steps. On the basis of cooperation agreements concluded with them, it worked with the police forces of several Brazilian states to advance the integration of applicable human rights norms into their manuals, training programmes and operating procedures. It also drew the attention of both the police and the armed forces to the rules applicable to the use of force in the maintenance of law and order, reviewed with them specific events from the point of view of IHL and international human rights law and maintained an ongoing dialogue with both forces. It extended the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme to 26 schools located in areas of Rio de Janeiro's *favelas* where the Brazilian Red Cross was conducting activities. In addition, it started to reinforce the operational capacity of the Rio de Janeiro Red Cross branch working in troubled neighbourhoods, in particular in the fields of first aid and the Safer Access approach, and to explore, together with the National Society, ways in which the Rio de Janeiro branch could improve basic services to residents living there.

ICRC delegates continued to visit security detainees in Paraguay and Mapuche Indians in Chile sentenced under Chile's anti-terrorist laws for acts of protest against the exploitation by multinational companies of natural resources located on ancestral lands. The ICRC submitted to the Paraguayan penitentiary authorities an assessment of health care in the country's prisons and discussed with them how best to implement the report's recommendations. Initial steps were also taken towards conducting a limited assessment of conditions in selected Brazilian prisons in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

As in past years, the ICRC promoted the national implementation of IHL throughout the region, with emphasis on the incorporation of the repression of war crimes into domestic legislation in Brazil and Paraguay and the ratification of the Rome Statute by Chile. It also worked with the region's armed forces to advance the integration of IHL into their doctrine, training and operating procedures and began implementing a cooperation programme with the police in Paraguay on the basis of an agreement signed in 2006. It briefed Brazilian contingents prior to their deployment on peacekeeping missions, particularly to Haiti.

The ICRC helped strengthen the capacities of National Societies in the region, notably in Chile and Brazil, to respond more effectively to emergencies arising from situations of internal violence.

CIVILIANS

People in need of protection, including landless farmers in Brazil and Paraguay and indigenous communities in Brazil and Chile, were monitored by the ICRC. On this basis, the ICRC made representations to the relevant authorities of alleged violations of international human rights law, and law enforcement agents were reminded of the rules applicable to the use of force in the maintenance of law and order. In Brazil and Paraguay, these actions were reinforced by the programmes conducted with the security and police forces (see *Armed forces and other bearers of weapons*).

The ICRC alerted the authorities concerned to the humanitarian consequences of the urban violence, particularly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. It increased its support to the Brazilian Red Cross, in particular to its branch in Rio de Janeiro, reinforcing its capacity to operate in troubled urban contexts (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

In July, some 100 residents of a Rio de Janeiro shantytown who had fled armed violence received emergency assistance. Also in July, some 500 displaced members of an indigenous community in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul received emergency assistance in a joint operation by the Brazilian Red Cross and the ICRC.

In November, an ICRC surgeon visited three hospitals caring for people injured during armed confrontations between security forces and alleged criminals in Rio de Janeiro's Complexo de Alemão to assess their capacities to treat victims of trauma and to determine the extent of the medical and social consequences of the urban violence. It was found that, although hospital staff had the technical capacities to deal with trauma cases, access to medical facilities, located as they were outside the *favelas*, was difficult for the affected populations. Moreover, the wounded were reluctant to seek help because of the double stigma associated with the nature of their injuries and their place of residence. Taking advantage of its role as a neutral and independent humanitarian intermediary, the ICRC, together with the National Society, started to explore ways of developing first-aid services with community leaders in some of Rio de Janeiro's shanty towns.

Restoring family links and clarifying the fate of missing persons

To help people locate family members with whom they had lost contact, the delegation pursued tracing efforts in conjunction with other ICRC delegations and National Societies in the region and elsewhere.

In May, forensic experts from 11 Latin American countries gathered in Buenos Aires to discuss the identification of human remains in connection with armed conflicts, situations of internal violence and natural disasters at a conference on forensic medicine co-organized by the Argentinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ICRC. The meeting, the first of its kind on the continent, enabled Latin American forensic institutes to strengthen their cooperation and coordination, to establish common criteria and methodologies for the identification of human remains, and to pave the way for the establishment of a regional network on forensic medicine.

Following an official request by the Chilean forensic institute for support in forensic data management to facilitate the identification of human remains, nine Chilean forensic experts underwent training in the use of software developed by the ICRC for the management of ante- and post-mortem data.

- ▶ 2 RCMs collected from and 3 RCMs distributed to civilians
- ▶ 2 telephone calls made to restore family links

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC visited detainees in Chile and Paraguay on the basis of agreements with the respective prison authorities. A similar draft agreement was submitted to the Argentinian authorities for approval. Discussions with the Brazilian authorities in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro centred on an ICRC proposal to carry out a survey of detention conditions in selected prisons.

Detainees in Chile were mainly from the indigenous Mapuche community; they had been sentenced under Chile's anti-terrorist laws for acts of protest against the exploitation by multinationals of natural resources located on ancestral land. In the second half of the year, some went on a hunger strike, five of them for more than 70 days, to protest against their detention conditions and to seek a revision of their trial, citing alleged irregularities. Their plight was discussed with the relevant authorities and their health closely monitored by an ICRC doctor.

In Paraguay, following the submission in June to the Ministries of Justice and Health of the report of a survey on health care in prisons, the authorities decided to draw up, with ICRC support, a plan of action to improve detention conditions.

To address the serious problems affecting penitentiary health care throughout the region, close to 70 prison health care professionals from 9 Latin American countries gathered in November in Chile at a seminar organized with ICRC support. They discussed the latest developments in controlling the spread of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS in penitentiary environments, exchanged best practices regarding the management of mental health, addictions and violence, and identified the mechanisms to be put in place to integrate penitentiary health into a country's mainstream public health policy. Also in Chile, 35 penitentiary health care professionals participated in a workshop on tuberculosis in June.

- ▶ in Chile, 22 security detainees visited and monitored individually (including 3 females), of whom 18 newly registered (including 2 females), during 17 visits to 8 places of detention
- ▶ in Paraguay, 22 security detainees visited and monitored individually (including 4 females) during 6 visits to 3 places of detention

AUTHORITIES

After Argentina and Uruguay passed laws implementing the Rome Statute in 2006, efforts to implement the Statute focused on Brazil and Paraguay, where the ICRC assisted in the drafting of laws to be submitted to parliament. In Argentina, legal experts reviewed the military justice code with the participation of the ICRC.

Throughout the region, national IHL committees benefited from the ICRC's advice in carrying out their tasks.

Contacts with MERCOSUR, a mechanism for the economic and political integration of Southern Cone countries, were reinforced with a view to signing a memorandum of understanding aimed at fostering greater cooperation on issues of mutual interest.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

The armed forces and IHL

In Brazil, chiefs of staff of the infantry were familiarized with IHL, and the Ministry of Defence issued a directive calling for IHL integration. A Canadian military manual, which was to serve as a model for the drafting of a Brazilian equivalent, was translated into Portuguese. The rules applicable to the use of force during law enforcement operations conducted by armed forces in urban settings were the subject of regular discussions with the military authorities.

In Chile, the working group in charge of IHL integration made good progress, meeting on three occasions with the ICRC's participation. The Argentinian Ministry of Defence drafted a new manual, to which the ICRC contributed comments.

The integration of IHL into the doctrine, training and operating procedures of the Paraguayan armed forces picked up pace, with students and lecturers from a school for staff officers attending two training courses on the subject.

Officers of the Brazilian armed forces and Argentinian, Brazilian and Paraguayan troops joining UN peacekeeping missions participated in training courses in which the ICRC took part as an observer.

Human rights norms relevant to policing

Given the escalating violence in Brazilian cities and the social protests linked to land distribution and indigenous issues, ensuring respect for the rules applicable to the use of force during law enforcement operations remained paramount throughout the region. In Brazil's federal political system, each state has its own police force with its own policies, manuals and procedures. On the basis of seven cooperation agreements concluded with the ICRC, police forces of Brazilian states received the support of consultants hired by the ICRC to integrate the relevant human rights norms into their manuals, procedures and training. By the end of 2007, the police forces of four Brazilian states had achieved their objectives. The cooperation agreement concluded with the police force of the state of Rio de Janeiro was extended. In view of the tense security situation there, the police force continued receiving support from a consultant, this time to facilitate the operational implementation of the revised rules and training. A national police unit recently created to assist the state police in dealing with situations of internal violence held discussions with the ICRC on the integration of relevant human rights norms.

In Paraguay, senior police officers attended a first workshop on the integration of relevant human rights norms into their training programmes and, to this end, completed a revision of their training manuals and doctrine.

CIVIL SOCIETY

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Malvinas/Falklands conflict, the humanitarian operations undertaken at the time by the ICRC, such as visiting prisoners of war and facilitating prisoner releases, were recalled in published interviews with ICRC delegates who had participated in the process. The occasion served as an opportunity to inform the public and members of civil society of the ICRC's vital work in time of war. National and regional media regularly received information on ICRC activities and humanitarian issues. Journalists in the region reported more accurately on humanitarian issues in ICRC operational contexts in Latin America and elsewhere.

In Brazil, the pilot-testing of the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme in 8 secondary schools located in violence-prone neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro was extended to 26 schools following a positive evaluation of its impact. The programme was also being taught in Chile and Uruguay. Some 300 university lecturers from across the region continued to enhance their knowledge of IHL through the receipt of updated material on the subject.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

National Society staff in Argentina applied the Safer Access approach in responding to the humanitarian consequences of internal violence. Brazilian Red Cross staff working in violence-prone neighbourhoods of Rio de Janeiro were trained in first-aid techniques and the Safer Access approach by an ICRC delegate based at the headquarters of the Brazilian Red Cross. The Chilean Red Cross improved its assistance to the indigenous Mapuche population through training in first aid and primary health care.

National Societies in the region continued to revise their statutes and develop their plans of action with support from the ICRC and the International Federation.