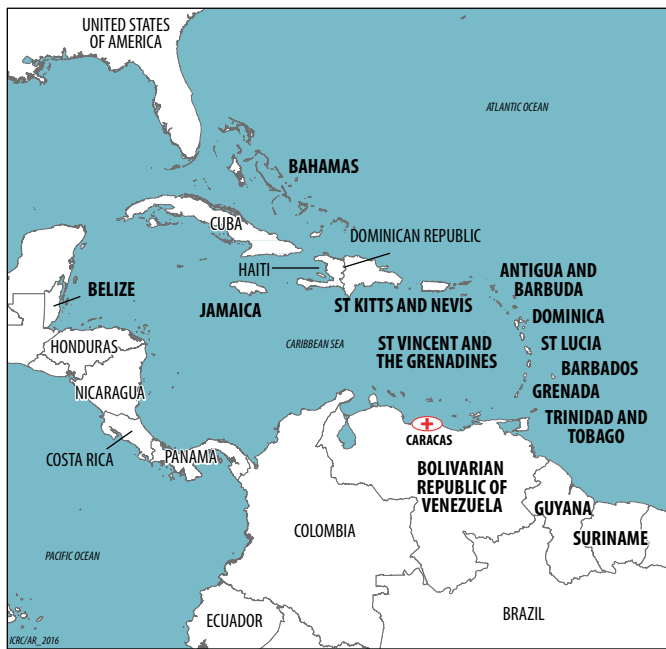


# CARACAS (regional)

**COVERING:** Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela



ICRC regional delegation

The boundaries, names and designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement, nor express a political opinion on the part of the ICRC, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned.

The Caracas regional delegation was established in 1971. It reinforces the capacities of the region's National Societies in the fields of IHL promotion, restoring family links, emergency response, and assistance to victims of violence. It seeks to visit detainees in Venezuela and monitors the humanitarian situation along the Venezuelan border with Colombia. It promotes the incorporation of IHL into national legislation and into the operational procedures and training of the region's armed forces, as well as the inclusion of human rights standards in police manuals and training.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ At Venezuelan Red Cross and/or ICRC workshops, personnel from public and military hospitals learnt more about treating people wounded by firearms and explosives, and emergency responders trained in providing life-saving care.
- ▶ Vulnerable residents and Colombian migrants in Venezuelan states bordering Colombia obtained basic health care and psychosocial support from the Venezuelan Red Cross, with ICRC backing.
- ▶ The Jamaica Red Cross, aided by the ICRC, sought to alleviate the impact of violence on young people, primarily by giving them access to sports and educational activities. The Belize Red Cross Society undertook similar efforts.
- ▶ Military and police personnel in three countries learnt more about international policing standards at ICRC workshops. The Venezuelan police and the ICRC resumed dialogue on topics of common interest after two years of no contact.
- ▶ Venezuelan penitentiary officials attended regional workshops on prison management with the ICRC's financial support. Detainees still did not receive visits from the ICRC.

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	1,141
Assistance	-
Prevention	678
Cooperation with National Societies	880
General	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,744</b>
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	167

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	88%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	14

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

## PROTECTION

	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
Restoring family links	
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)	1

## CONTEXT

The government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereafter Venezuela) continued to grapple with a deteriorating economy – characterized most notably by shortages of essential goods and high inflation rates – and with a political impasse. Street protests linked to these issues, and incidents of looting, increased and sometimes resulted in casualties. The government declared a state of emergency that gave the president additional executive powers; it also initiated talks with the opposition. Unabated violence in some neighbourhoods prompted the authorities to ramp up law enforcement operations there.

The Venezuelan authorities gradually reopened – albeit with some interruptions – the country's border with Colombia, which had been closed in 2015 owing to security concerns. Communities living along the border remained vulnerable to the effects of the conflict in Colombia.

Issues related to migration, gang violence and crime – and allegations of the use of excessive force during security operations – remained matters of concern in some States in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Military forces assisted the police during law enforcement operations in Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. In Belize, the military no longer took part in such operations, but continued to carry out joint border patrols with their police counterparts. Tensions along the Belize-Guatemala border sometimes led to skirmishes. General elections in Jamaica and in Saint Lucia were won by opposition parties.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued to support and work with the region's National Societies and other local partners in helping people prepare for possible emergencies or cope with the effects of violence. Regular coordination among Movement partners helped ensure effective implementation of projects.

In line with the Safer Access Framework and in support of the goals of the Health Care in Danger project, the Venezuelan Red Cross and the ICRC prioritized helping boost the capacities of emergency responders. National Society and/or ICRC workshops enabled health personnel from public and military hospitals to refine their skills in treating the wounded and to heighten their knowledge of how to protect themselves against violence. Informational materials produced by the National Society and the ICRC helped instruct the public in basic first aid and broadened awareness of the need to facilitate access for health staff to wounded and sick people. With ICRC backing, the National Society provided vulnerable residents and Colombian migrants living along the Colombia-Venezuela border with basic health care and psychosocial support.

The ICRC guided Jamaica Red Cross initiatives aimed at alleviating the impact of violence on young people; it also helped the Belize Red Cross Society to begin similar efforts. The Jamaican National Society facilitated young people's access to sports-related and educational activities and offered them counselling services.

The ICRC continued to promote respect for international policing standards and IHL throughout the region. It offered technical assistance in countries where military and police forces conducted joint security operations. Venezuelan military officials participated in ICRC-organized IHL sessions held locally or abroad. Dialogue between the Venezuelan police and the ICRC, on topics of common

interest, resumed after two years without contact between the two parties. Although the ICRC remained unable to visit detainees in Venezuela, it developed working relations with penitentiary officials through workshops on internationally recognized standards for detention.

## CIVILIANS

The ICRC continued to engage key parties in dialogue, and to monitor the situation in the region, to better understand the dynamics of the prevailing violence. It also explored opportunities for working with local partners to address issues of humanitarian concern, such as the need to ensure respect for health services during emergencies, especially in violence-prone urban areas of Venezuela.

National Societies in the region continued to strengthen their ability to mount effective responses to emergencies and to the needs of vulnerable people. ICRC financial, material and technical assistance – for instance, the pre-positioning of surgical kits at five Venezuelan Red Cross branches – supported their efforts.

The Bahamian, Jamaican and Venezuelan National Societies continued to be encouraged to strengthen their family-links services. Representatives of the Jamaican Red Cross participated in the Movement's regional meeting on these services, with ICRC financial input. The Venezuelan National Society appointed a focal point to follow up family-links cases; however, National Societies in the Bahamas and Jamaica made little progress in developing an action plan for family-links activities.

### Doctors at public and military hospitals in Venezuela expand their capacities to treat wounded patients

During ICRC workshops in Venezuela, roughly 800 doctors and other medical staff from seven public and military health facilities developed their capacity to treat people wounded by firearms or explosives. Some personnel from one military facility also learnt more about the goals of the Health Care in Danger project.

The National Society and the ICRC held training sessions and implemented communication efforts to strengthen violence-affected communities' emergency preparedness and to encourage people to facilitate safe access for responders to the wounded and the sick (see *Actors of influence*). Fifty members of one community in Venezuela learnt more about first-aid techniques; eight young people among them subsequently formed a health brigade. During workshops, nearly 100 staff – doctors, administrative personnel and security guards – from four National Society-run hospitals in provincial cities familiarized themselves with the Health Care in Danger project and learnt how to protect themselves against violence. They also received training in the provision of psychosocial support. In two cities, National Society volunteers and other first responders attended training sessions on the management of human remains.

In Venezuelan border areas, ICRC-backed National Society staff and volunteers helped vulnerable residents and Colombian migrants, including refugees, to cope with the effects of the conflict in Colombia: over 1,200 people received basic health care and psychosocial support, and another 300 learnt how to administer first aid.

### Violence-affected young people in Jamaica access sports and educational activities

ICRC support enabled the National Societies in Belize and Jamaica to begin and expand, respectively, a project to alleviate the impact

of violence on young people. In Jamaica, the project facilitated young people's access to sports-related activities and offered them counselling services. In addition, 60 schoolchildren affected by gang violence and without access to government services learnt reading, writing and basic arithmetic, and acquired vocational skills, at ICRC-supported National Society schools.

### PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in Venezuela still did not receive visits from the ICRC; these visits had been suspended since December 2012. Nevertheless, the ICRC pursued efforts to clarify, among the authorities concerned, the nature of its activities for detainees. Penitentiary officials deepened their knowledge of prison management at regional workshops (see *Colombia* and *Mexico City*), with ICRC financial support. During training events organized by the pertinent authorities, which the ICRC attended, military prison guards familiarized themselves with internationally recognized standards for the treatment of detainees and learnt more about the ICRC's detention activities.

Seventeen Cuban migrants detained in Jamaica received ad hoc visits from the Jamaican National Society and the ICRC.

### ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

#### Venezuelan police and the ICRC resume dialogue on international policing standards

Military and police forces in Belize, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago continued to receive encouragement, guidance and training for incorporating international policing standards in their doctrine, training and operations. Dialogue with the military and police enabled them to understand more fully the need to coordinate their security operations and carry out tailored training sessions. During the 12th Conference of Defence Ministers of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, Member States renewed their commitment to incorporate IHL and international human rights law in law enforcement operations.

Members of the Venezuelan military deepened their knowledge of IHL during ICRC training courses and with the help of ICRC-donated publications on the topic. One military officer participated in an international workshop on rules governing military operations (see *International law and policy*). After more than two years without contact, the Venezuelan police and the ICRC resumed dialogue on subjects of common concern. A police official took part in an ICRC regional colloquium on international standards for the use of force (see *Lima*).

#### Venezuelan foreign ministry convenes the first session of the national IHL committee

The ICRC continued to engage in dialogue with every State covered by the delegation and pertinent regional or multilateral bodies, such as the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security, on ratifying and implementing IHL-related treaties. It also monitored the degree to which States were fulfilling the pledges – mostly in relation to detention and sexual violence – that they had made at the 32nd International Conference.

The Venezuelan foreign ministry convened the first session of the national IHL committee in order to discuss the committee's objectives; the ICRC took part in this meeting.

#### Residents of violence-prone areas in Venezuela acquaint themselves with the Fundamental Principles

In Venezuela, the authorities, the diplomatic community, civil society organizations and the wider public learnt more about the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian activities through various National Society and ICRC initiatives. Residents of violence-prone neighbourhoods, especially young people, acquainted themselves with the Fundamental Principles and learnt basic first-aid methods through National Society publications and radio spots, published and broadcast with ICRC support. Contact with community organizations enabled the National Society and the ICRC to conduct first-aid training in some neighbourhoods (see *Civilians*).

### RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

National Societies in the region continued to receive financial, material and technical support from Movement partners for improving their institutional set-up and strengthening their capacity to respond to emergencies and/or to the effects of violence.

In Venezuela, the National Society and the ICRC assessed the emergency preparedness of selected National Society branches, with a view to improving National Society coordination of aid delivery. Some Venezuelan Red Cross staff participated in ICRC workshops on the Safer Access Framework and a course on health emergencies (see *Mexico City*). Others developed their ability, via training, to present or describe the Movement and the National Society's activities to the public.

Movement partners throughout the region held coordination meetings periodically to share experiences; they also conducted joint missions to monitor the implementation of projects.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons					
			Women	Girls	Boys
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)		1			
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		1			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		1		1	