

# COLOMBIA



ICRC/AR\_2012  
 + ICRC delegation + ICRC sub-delegation + ICRC office

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	9,632
Assistance	18,311
Prevention	4,191
Cooperation with National Societies	1,772
General	-

► **33,906**  
 of which: Overheads 2,069

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	102%
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## PERSONNEL

Expatriates	66
National staff (daily workers not included)	294

## KEY POINTS

### In 2012, the ICRC:

- assisted IDPs and conflict-affected residents by providing them with emergency relief, helping them enhance their economic security and rehabilitating/constructing essential community infrastructure
- helped provide access to health services both for weapon-wounded patients and for the general population in remote areas, while advocating better protection for medical services in armed conflict or violence
- acted as a neutral intermediary during the peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army, providing IHL advice and securing safe passage for negotiators
- as a neutral intermediary, facilitated the safe handover and return to their families of 36 people held by armed groups and of the remains of 13 people, including 12 previously unaccounted for as a result of the conflict
- with the National Society and other partners, continued a violence-prevention project in Medellín, targeting youth and other particularly vulnerable victims of violence, as well as weapon bearers
- supported the authorities in reforming the detention system, providing input on the draft penitentiary code and recommendations on improving prison infrastructure and health services

In Colombia since 1969, the ICRC strives to protect and assist victims of the armed conflict, to secure greater compliance with IHL by all weapon bearers, and to promote integration of IHL into the armed forces' doctrine, training and operations. The ICRC also visits security detainees. For IDPs and residents in rural and urban areas, it provides relief, helps ensure access to health care, and carries out small-scale repairs to infrastructure. It also runs a comprehensive mine-action programme. It works closely with the Colombian Red Cross and other Movement components active in Colombia.

## CONTEXT

In August, the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) signed an agreement that led to the initiation of peace talks in Cuba in October. Alongside the negotiations, the government pursued major reforms, including by starting to implement recently enacted laws granting reparations to conflict victims and instituting measures to assist missing persons' families.

Confrontations still occurred, however, between the security forces and various armed groups, as well as between armed groups, over the exploitation of land and natural resources and the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. Civilians remained at risk of abuses, including summary execution, enforced disappearance, forced displacement, abduction, sexual violence and death threats, prompting many to flee their homes. Access to basic services was often limited in the affected areas, and the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) restricted movement. In cities, such as in certain neighbourhoods of Medellín or Buenaventura, organized violence or drug-related crime similarly affected the residents, particularly young people.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In 2012, the ICRC pursued a multidisciplinary approach to the needs of conflict- and violence-affected people in Colombia. It concentrated its operations in 24 priority zones, both in remote rural areas and in urban settings. It maintained dialogue with all parties to the conflict, emphasizing the protection of civilians and making confidential representations regarding reported violations of IHL and other applicable rules.

Acceptance by all parties allowed the ICRC to facilitate the release of 36 people held by armed groups and the handover to the relatives of 13 sets of human remains. In its capacity as a neutral intermediary, it provided IHL advice in the context of the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP (see *Context*) and secured safe passage for the negotiators.

While encouraging the authorities to improve their response to IDPs' concerns, the ICRC, operating in partnership with the Colombian Red Cross, assisted displaced people and residents of conflict-affected areas in meeting their basic needs. Agricultural projects boosted the beneficiaries' self-sufficiency. The rehabilitation/construction of water, health and education facilities, counselling, vocational training and risk-reduction measures to address the effects of weapon contamination further

Main figures and indicators	PROTECTION	Total		
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>				
			UAMs/SCs*	
RCMs collected		118	41	
RCMs distributed		110	7	
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>				
People reunited with their families		2		
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	2		
People transferred/repatriated		36		
Human remains transferred/repatriated		13		
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>				
			Women	Minors
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		477	136	100
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		233		
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	2		
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period		386	91	86
<b>UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</b>				
			Girls	Demobilized children
UAMs/SCs reunited with their families by the ICRC/National Society		2	1	
	<i>including UAMs/SCs registered by another delegation</i>	2		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>				
			Women	Minors
Detainees visited		3,623		
Detainees visited and monitored individually		1,995	94	6
Detainees newly registered		116	12	6
Number of visits carried out		161		
Number of places of detention visited		67		
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected		97		
RCMs distributed		36		
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		1,414		

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

strengthened these communities' resilience in coping with the effects of the conflict.

The ICRC worked with the authorities to improve the protection of health services during armed conflict or violence. It obtained security guarantees for mobile health units, accompanying local health staff or sending its own personnel when necessary. Local capacities improved with the continued training of medical personnel, including those of the military and armed groups, and of community-based first-responders in caring for the weapon-wounded. Other patients, including victims of sexual violence, had consultations in ICRC-supported facilities, received financial assistance to cover their treatment costs or were referred to hospital. Those in need of physical rehabilitation, including mine/ERW victims, accessed these services at ICRC-supported centres.

The ICRC addressed the humanitarian consequences of weapon contamination through prevention activities and intensified its dialogue with all parties to the conflict, encouraging the authorities to implement a comprehensive response, including by ratifying weapons-related IHL treaties.

In dialogue with local authorities and school administrators, the ICRC developed a response to the consequences of violence in cities, particularly in Medellín. Livelihood opportunities and seminars on sexual and reproductive health facilitated the social integration of urban youth and lessened their exposure to risks associated with violence-prone environments.

Work to shed light on the fate of missing persons and ensure support for their families continued, in cooperation with State entities, family associations and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Recommendations submitted to judicial and

forensic authorities aimed to ensure the efficient implementation of relevant laws and contribute to developing standards for the identification of human remains. Families of the missing received psychological and social support from the ICRC or through NGOs.

The ICRC provided confidential feedback to the authorities regarding the treatment and living conditions of detainees. It supported the penitentiary reform process, offering advice on improving health services and prison infrastructure.

Briefings for government personnel, troops, police officers and members of armed groups contributed to the dissemination of IHL and other applicable norms and their translation into practice. Contacts with the media and other civil society stakeholders led to increased public awareness of the humanitarian needs of victims of conflict and violence and of the ICRC's role and activities.

Constant cooperation in addressing conflict victims' needs enhanced the Colombian Red Cross's and the ICRC's respective capacities. Further training, especially in volunteer management, project planning, emergency preparedness and response, and security, enabled the National Society to implement a coherent and effective response while sustaining coordination with Movement partners and other humanitarian actors.

## CIVILIANS

Civilians in conflict-affected areas continued to report abuses to the ICRC, which made confidential representations to the authorities and weapon bearers urging them to end such practices. The humanitarian consequences of the fumigation or manual eradication of illicit crops were also discussed with the authorities concerned.

Main figures and indicators	ASSISTANCE	Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	22,397	29%	50%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	21,328		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	32,869	30%	50%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	31,803		
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	7,358	41%	35%
Cash	Beneficiaries	18,027	31%	48%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	17,555		
Vouchers	Beneficiaries	15,990	29%	51%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	15,990		
Work, services and training	Beneficiaries	36,277	31%	45%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	27,267		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	14,835	31%	35%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	5,210		
<b>Health</b>				
Health centres supported	Structures	40		
Average catchment population		62,741		
Consultations	Patients	4,934		
	<i>of which curative</i>		1,266	1,890
	<i>of which ante/post-natal</i>		53	
Immunizations	Doses	885		
	<i>of which for children aged five or under</i>	610		
Referrals to a second level of care	Patients	23		
Health education	Sessions	18		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	7,439		
<b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>				
<b>Hospitals</b>				
Patients whose hospital treatment has been paid for by the ICRC	Patients	892		
<b>Physical rehabilitation</b>				
Centres supported	Structures	4		
Patients receiving services	Patients	30,415	13,205	4,582
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	294	45	16
Prostheses delivered	Units	625	130	30
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	97		
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	2,096	369	1,268
Orthoses delivered	Units	3,691	714	2,079
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	8		
Number of patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	5,666	2,502	635
Crutches delivered	Units	53		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	52		

### Conflict-affected people benefit from emergency aid and essential services

In total, 1,108 victims of child recruitment, sexual violence and/or death threats (516 households) received emergency assistance or help in moving to safer places. Among them, 119 families of civilians who had been killed in connection with the conflict, including mine/ERW victims, received help in transporting their relatives' remains and covering funeral expenses. Through RCMs, 24 minors previously associated with armed groups and four who were separated from their families re-established contact with their relatives.

To minimize the impact of fighting and mine/ERW contamination and to deal with the influx of IDPs, communities reinforced their existing coping mechanisms with the ICRC's help. At the same time, the authorities were reminded to step up their response to the victims' needs.

### Communities affected by hostilities improve their economic security

In communities sharing scarce resources with IDPs or facing movement restrictions, 1,069 people (366 households) received three-month food rations and 1,066 (278 households) were given

essential household items to meet immediate needs. To increase their economic security and reduce the risk of displacement, 1,593 households (6,958 residents) in rural areas affected by conflict or mine/ERW contamination started agricultural projects.

As the new State agency dealing with IDPs was not yet operational, the Colombian Red Cross/ICRC extended the provision of direct assistance to IDPs in four cities – originally slated to end in June – until the end of December. IDPs in rural areas inaccessible by State services received emergency assistance, in kind or in the form of vouchers or cash, for up to three months. In total, 21,328 people (6,640 households) received food and 31,803 (8,753 households) received essential household items. Over 20,800 vouchers for food and nearly 53,500 for non-food items were distributed to 15,990 individuals (4,831 households) and cash to 16,514 individuals (4,997 households).

Government entities were encouraged to further improve their response, including through the mass registration of conflict-affected people to entitle them to State assistance. With direct or indirect assistance from the ICRC, 35,877 people (8,007 households), including 27,267 IDPs (6,085 households), went through this

registration process. Among them, approximately 2,000 IDPs and conflict-affected residents benefited from community-based projects, which provided psychological support, vocational training and information on government services. To better address victims' specific needs, the ICRC inventoried the available psychological/social services and identified good practices in the protection of children during armed conflict.

Over 5,200 IDPs in community shelters and almost 7,000 in rural and urban areas had better access to water, sanitation and improved living conditions. In addition, over 200 people benefited from the construction of facilities for agricultural production. For more than 2,400 children, renovated or rebuilt school infrastructure meant higher attendance rates, better hygiene and less exposure to weapon contamination, recruitment by armed groups and other effects of the conflict. Thanks to the rehabilitation of four health facilities, around 60 people per day had access to medical consultations and other health services.

### **People in remote areas access health services**

Access to health services improved for more than 600,000 people through ICRC support to 40 health facilities. Some 85,000 of them accessed primary health care after the ICRC, as a neutral intermediary, obtained safe passage for 11 mobile health units operated by the Health Ministry or by ICRC staff where the security of national health workers could not be guaranteed. The services provided included maternal and child care, immunization and referral to hospital.

A total of 402 patients, including 117 victims of sexual violence (23 of whom were in Medellín – see below), received financial assistance for their treatment and 717 were referred to State services. In parallel, the ICRC urged the authorities to enhance the provision of health services and to disseminate information on how to access these.

An ICRC-supported national working group on violence against medical services convened eight round-tables and started implementing measures to address the problem. Some 3,400 health professionals from 279 facilities were briefed on their rights, duties and safe behaviour. Discussions on topics related to the Health Care in Danger project also took place with key decision-makers, contributing to the proper marking of 174 medical facilities. The Ministry of Health adopted a new regulation protecting medical services, while 94 prosecutors attended a briefing on the rights and duties of medical personnel.

### **Residents of weapon-contaminated areas learn to protect themselves**

Nearly 4,300 residents of mine/ERW-contaminated areas learnt about safe behaviour and victims' rights through ICRC activities, and over 200 weapon-contamination victims and their relatives received information on accessing State benefits, aside from economic assistance (see above). A further 3,700 people benefited from the National Society's prevention projects, such as risk-education workshops and first-aid training, with Norwegian Red Cross/ICRC support. Risk-reduction measures, such as agricultural projects in safer areas and fence construction around football grounds, helped prevent injuries and deaths.

By end-2012, around 2,000 victims of weapon contamination had been registered in the mine-action database. While encouraging health authorities, security forces and civil society bodies to

address the issue, the ICRC also reminded weapon bearers of the effects of mines/ERW on communities.

### **Violence-affected urban youth improve their health and livelihoods**

In eight violence-affected urban neighbourhoods in Medellín, the ICRC assessed community needs, broadened its dialogue with weapon bearers and initiated cooperation on violence prevention with local education authorities and school administrators.

To facilitate their social integration, 100 families (400 people) of young people at risk received training and cash grants through a micro-credit project. Out of 39 people who were referred to employment opportunities in the public and private sectors, 17 obtained jobs.

In addition to the assistance provided to victims of sexual violence (see above), workshops on sexual and reproductive health, organized with a local NGO, helped over 1,000 young people take better care of themselves. Following an assessment of their needs, almost 14,000 beneficiaries in Buenaventura, Nechí and Tierralta received psychological support to help them deal with the consequences of violence in their daily lives. Community members trained in first aid, and municipal institutions worked to strengthen their capacities to conduct emergency medical evacuations.

### **Families of missing persons better able to engage with authorities**

With ICRC backing, State entities and family associations continued their efforts to clarify the fate of persons missing in relation to the conflict and to ensure that affected families received due support and, if their missing relatives had died, had the remains returned to them. Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC facilitated the recovery and handover of 13 sets of human remains. Weapon bearers were also reminded to provide information on the fate of missing persons.

A working group co-facilitated by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ICRC gave the authorities recommendations on the implementation of the law on missing persons, DNA data management, the handling of human remains and the provision of psychological/social support. Along with such support, 44 relatives of missing persons had an opportunity to present their needs and recommendations to the authorities. In the framework of the working group's activities, 60 prosecutors and forensic experts gained more familiarity with internationally recognized standards and received practical recommendations on expediting the identification of human remains.

### **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

People detained for conflict-related reasons received regular visits according to standard ICRC procedures. Their treatment and living conditions were monitored and confidential feedback provided to the authorities, particularly on urgent medical cases. Detainees re-established contact with their families through RCMs and ICRC-funded family visits. Through dialogue with the authorities, the ICRC continued advocating a policy of detaining people closer to their homes.

In the framework of the ongoing prison reform, the authorities integrated ICRC input into the draft penitentiary code and welcomed its recommendations on improving penitentiary medical services. A working group established by the Ministry of Health

and the WHO started developing guidelines on TB management in prisons, with ICRC expertise. On the basis of an in-depth assessment of conditions in four prisons housing a total of about 7,000 inmates, further recommendations were given on improving infrastructure and access to water, sanitation and open air. The findings of a seminar on this topic were instrumental in the design and planning of six new detention facilities, showing progress towards the establishment of national standards.

Following visits to rehabilitation centres in Medellín, the authorities started to implement recommendations to improve the conditions of detention and provide enhanced education and social reintegration services to detained minors.

Acting as a neutral intermediary and with Brazil's logistical support on one occasion, the ICRC facilitated the release and hand-over to their families of 36 people held by armed groups. The families and an organization supporting the families of security force personnel held by armed groups benefited from psychological and financial support, respectively.

### WOUNDED AND SICK

More than 700 weapon-wounded people from remote areas were referred to government health services for specialized care, and 490 received ICRC financial assistance to cover their transportation, lodging and treatment costs. With National Society support in some cases, the ICRC evacuated 14 wounded people for medical treatment. Facilities attending to such patients received weapon-wound treatment kits, enabling them to respond to emergencies.

A total of 345 civilian doctors and nurses working in conflict zones were trained in weapon-wound care during sessions co-organized with a university in Bogotá, while 38 doctors in Medellín attended a similar seminar. Two universities integrated war-surgery courses into their curricula, and three other universities stood to follow suit. Some 180 military medical personnel participated in two war-surgery seminars; members of armed groups were likewise trained to treat weapon-related injuries using limited resources. In cooperation with the Colombian Red Cross, over 1,000 civilians and 330 nursing assistants were trained in first aid.

Over 30,000 patients, including mine/ERW victims, received multidisciplinary services, sometimes including food and lodging, at ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres. In Cali and Cúcuta, the quality of these services improved with on-the-job training for local technicians. Likewise, some 100 physiotherapy and prosthetic/orthotic technicians from the private and public sectors upgraded their skills through ICRC-supported training. Technical advice provided to the health authorities on the implementation of a resolution on best practices in physical rehabilitation helped providers of these services, prosthesis manufacturers and educational institutions integrate such practices into their work.

### AUTHORITIES

Acting as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC provided IHL advice in the context of the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, and facilitated safe passage for the negotiators of both sides.

Colombia ratified the Convention on Enforced Disappearance and, with legislative approval, moved closer towards ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. While the ratification of Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

remained pending, the government prepared to start the process of ratifying Additional Protocol III. The promulgation of a law recognizing the legal status of victims of enforced or involuntary disappearance advanced efforts to address the families' needs. The Congress made progress in drafting a law on sexual violence in non-international armed conflict, with special emphasis on criminal sanctions. The government also took steps to implement the law on land restitution for conflict victims.

Interior Ministry officials and civil servants of national bodies concerned with IHL and human rights honed their skills through ICRC-organized IHL training sessions. At the request of the Vice-presidency, the ICRC provided technical advice to the National Human Rights and IHL System, whose task it was to coordinate and propose State policies on these matters.

Colombia supported resolutions on IHL-related concerns, missing persons and IDPs at the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (see *Washington*). Representatives of the international community learnt more about ICRC operations in the country through several field visits to project implementation sites.

### ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Members of the armed and security forces pursued the integration of IHL into their doctrine, training and operations. Following a directive issued by the Defence Ministry, some 1,500 military and police personnel participated in IHL training workshops and briefing sessions; 11 of these, on the protection of medical services, were co-organized by the Presidential Programme on Human Rights and IHL. The Presidential Programme and the ICRC also engaged in discussions in preparation for after-action review exercises, in which 51 police officers deployed in violence-affected neighbourhoods took part. A further 8,000 armed forces and law enforcement personnel, as well as members of armed groups, received briefings on IHL and Movement action.

In Medellín, 46 police officers boosted their capacities to provide training in international human rights and law enforcement standards, while 149 participated in workshops on the use of force and firearms in situations of violence.

### CIVIL SOCIETY

The media continued to play a key role in enhancing public understanding of the ICRC's concerns and its neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action. Through five workshops and first-hand access to conflict zones with ICRC accompaniment, journalists reported on IHL-related themes and humanitarian issues more accurately.

Following the multimedia launch of an ICRC report on its activities in the country in 2011, the Colombian press published more than 100 articles on humanitarian topics, including the protection of medical services, and gave greater visibility to the plight of conflict victims. State officials, diplomats and representatives of civil society organizations and the media attended events surrounding the launch. Staff of local NGOs and of six National Societies in Latin America and Africa attended a regional workshop on National Society/ICRC projects targeting violence-affected youth in various contexts.

By providing relevant advice and materials to the Mining and Energy Committee on Security and Human Rights, the ICRC shared with private companies its observations regarding the potential impact of their activities on remote communities.

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## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC further cemented their cooperation in dealing with the needs of violence- and conflict-affected people, mutually reinforcing their respective capacities and working towards a more efficient and coordinated response. The National Society played a key role in the distribution of emergency relief to IDPs, in improving access to water, sanitation and health services in conflict-affected communities and in risk-prevention activities in weapon-contaminated areas (see *Civilians*).

Nearly 500 volunteers from 15 National Society branches improved their skills in project and volunteer management, emergency planning and response, security management and safer access. Along with representatives of other National Societies in the region, 25 Colombian Red Cross staff underwent training in family-links services and the management of dead bodies in disasters and armed conflict.

Through monthly meetings, Movement partners present in Colombia coordinated their activities and exchanged crucial information, especially regarding security incidents and field activities.