

# COLOMBIA



⊕ ICRC delegation 
 ⊕ ICRC sub-delegation 
 + ICRC office  
⚠ ICRC-supported orthotic/prosthetic project

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ Through ICRC-provided job referrals, microeconomic initiatives and supplies/equipment, heads of IDP, returnee and resident households earned money, enabling some to cover their family's daily food needs.
- ▶ Victims of sexual violence and the families of missing persons coped with their situation with the help of psychological or psychosocial assistance from ICRC-trained health-care providers.
- ▶ Under a project by the penitentiary authorities/ICRC, some inmates in Colombia's largest prison had improved medical check-ups on arrival, and staff received support to improve/maintain facilities.
- ▶ The armed forces produced a practical guide to apply IHL and other relevant laws in its operations, and distributed it among its field instructors.
- ▶ Colombia ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the government issued a decree aimed at assisting the families of missing persons, for instance, by organizing commemorative events.
- ▶ Some 16,000 people learnt more about the basic provisions of IHL by completing an online course on the website of the Colombian Red Cross.

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	8,487
Assistance	13,880
Prevention	3,094
Cooperation with National Societies	1,408
General	571

**Total 27,441**  
Of which: Overheads 1,675

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	82%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	65
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	303

In Colombia since 1969, the ICRC strives to protect and assist victims of the armed conflict and situations of violence, secure greater compliance with IHL by all weapon bearers, and promote integration of IHL and international human rights norms into the security forces' doctrine, training and operations. The ICRC 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 runs a comprehensive mine-action programme. It works closely with the Colombian Red Cross and other Movement components active in Colombia.

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	50
RCMs distributed	34
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	132
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	85,175
Detainees visited and monitored individually	517
Number of visits carried out	132
Number of places of detention visited	50
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	19
RCMs distributed	5

ASSISTANCE	2015 Targets (up to)	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>		
Food commodities	Beneficiaries 14,000	6,799
Essential household items	Beneficiaries 12,000	5,840
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries 8,000	27,116
Cash	Beneficiaries 5,440	90,379
Services and training	Beneficiaries 480	78,740
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries 14,500	17,887
<b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>		
<b>Hospitals</b>		
Hospitals supported	Structures	17
<b>Physical rehabilitation</b>		
Projects supported	Structures 6	9
Patients receiving services	Patients 12,000	12,551

## CONTEXT

Hostilities between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP) abated, owing to the FARC-EP’s unilateral ceasefire declaration in July. This led to the government suspending aerial bombings against the armed group, although ground operations continued. At the same time, negotiations to end the armed conflict progressed: the two parties concluded agreements on four of the six points on the agenda, including transitional justice, and on addressing specific humanitarian concerns related to demining and to the families of missing persons; they jointly implemented humanitarian demining activities in two departments of Colombia.

Exploratory talks continued between the government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) on a peace process.

In certain parts of Colombia, other armed groups continued to fight with security forces or among themselves for control of land, natural resources and trade routes.

Communities continued to suffer the effects of conflict/violence, especially with regard to weapon contamination, sexual violence and restricted access to livelihood opportunities.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

In Colombia, the ICRC secured acceptance for its role as a neutral intermediary among parties to the conflict and other weapon bearers, through confidential dialogue and its operational presence in rural and urban areas affected by conflict/violence. As a result, the ICRC was able to facilitate the release of people held by armed groups and the transfer of human remains for identification and burial, and safely reach and assist communities affected by fighting.

To strengthen respect for IHL and/or other relevant norms among parties concerned, the ICRC reminded them of their obligations under IHL and other applicable laws, on the basis of documented allegations of IHL violations; it also provided technical guidance/training for the authorities and the military/police. Such support contributed to the publication of a military guide to the application of IHL and other relevant norms in their operations, the creation of a military/police protocol to prevent sexual violence during armed conflict, and the issuance of a governmental decree to assist the families of missing persons. Partnerships with the media, and a basic course in IHL on the Colombian Red Cross website, fostered public awareness of IHL and issues of humanitarian concern.

Regular cooperation in addressing humanitarian needs expanded the capabilities of both the National Society and the ICRC. Through ICRC-facilitated training, the National Society developed the skills of its volunteers and staff, particularly in responding to emergencies and restoring family links.

With ICRC support, State and local institutions continued to strengthen their ability to respond to the needs of people affected by conflict/violence, although they faced some challenges in this regard, mostly linked to the volume of requests for assistance. Therefore, the ICRC, usually with the National Society, provided direct assistance to the communities affected in order to fill the gaps in the State’s response; however, fewer people than planned needed help because the fighting between the government and the

FARC-EP had decreased (see *Context*). Food and household essentials covered IDPs’ immediate needs, and livelihood support enabled heads of vulnerable households, including women, to earn money.

The ICRC helped wounded/sick people and victims of sexual violence obtain suitable health-care services; it also organized training courses, designed specifically for emergency responders and medical personnel. Disabled persons benefited from rehabilitative care at more ICRC-supported centres than in the previous year. Medical workers learnt more about their rights and duties and, along with health facilities, received markers bearing the red cross emblem.

The National Society/ICRC organized workshops at which community members learnt to protect themselves from mines/explosive remnants of war (ERW). They also built/improved community infrastructure to make daily activities safer for residents, including schoolchildren.

The authorities and other parties concerned continued to receive ICRC support for enhancing their management of human remains. The ICRC and its partners helped the families of missing persons cope by providing psychosocial support and/or facilitating their access to legal and administrative services.

Delegates visited detainees in accordance with standard ICRC procedures, and reported their findings confidentially to the authorities. The pertinent authorities, with technical guidance from the ICRC, took steps to ensure that detainees’ treatment and living conditions conformed to internationally recognized standards. For example, they developed training programmes to facilitate the application of laws protecting minors and to hone the capacities of prison-health staff. The ICRC and the penitentiary authorities launched a multi-disciplinary project in the country’s largest prison. As a result, some new inmates benefited from improved medical examinations, and the staff received support for maintaining/improving infrastructure; efforts to help ensure detainees’ judicial guarantees ceased, owing to the State’s limited resources.

## CIVILIANS

Parties to the conflict and the ICRC confidentially discussed various issues of humanitarian concern: protection for civilians and health services, cases of missing persons and the release of minors associated with armed groups. Written/oral representations on documented allegations of IHL violations reminded weapon bearers of their obligations under IHL and other applicable laws; the armed forces later informed the ICRC of the actions they had taken after investigating these allegations. Parties affirmed their understanding of and acceptance for the ICRC’s role as a neutral intermediary, particularly in the context of the peace talks and humanitarian demining.

In violence-affected urban areas, ICRC efforts to strengthen dialogue with weapon bearers, on humanitarian issues, continued. With ICRC support, youth and women’s networks in Medellín promoted measures to protect people from violence and directed victims of sexual violence to the services available. As planned, these and other ICRC activities to assist communities in Medellín wrapped up by year’s end.

## IDPs maintain or improve their pre-displacement diet

With ICRC technical and material input, the State’s victim assistance unit and other institutions continued to bolster their ability to assist conflict/violence-affected people. However, it was difficult for the State

unit to register and respond to the needs of IDPs and other victims in a timely manner, partly because of budgetary constraints and the number of victims needing assistance. By itself or with the National Society, the ICRC contributed to filling the gaps in State coverage.

At ICRC orientation sessions, victims of mines/ERW learnt more about administrative procedures for obtaining free medical care and financial compensation; others applied for these benefits thanks to the ICRC covering their transportation/administrative costs.

Through regular or ad hoc ICRC support, tens of thousands of IDPs and residents in rural and urban neighbourhoods became more resilient to the consequences of conflict/violence. They covered their daily household needs and worked towards self-sufficiency; others relocated/evacuated temporarily, or covered funeral costs for relatives. Owing to the decrease in hostilities between the government and the FARC-EP, fewer conflict-affected people than targeted required ICRC assistance.

Over 3,200 IDPs (800 households) met their immediate needs with the help of household essentials; 2,516 of them (624 households) also benefited from two-month food rations that allowed them to maintain/improve their pre-displacement diet. Another 5,999 IDPs (1,640 households) acquired basic necessities with the help of cash grants.

### **Conflict/violence-affected households increase their income-earning or food-producing capacities**

To boost their job prospects and alleviate the financial impact of their displacement, 1,515 heads of IDP households (benefiting 8,658 people) enrolled in vocational training courses and/or obtained short-term employment at private companies, during which the ICRC covered a percentage of their salaries. Nearly 120 heads of resident households (515 people) in Medellín benefited from job referrals and vocational training. Microeconomic initiatives and cash-for-work projects also helped some 400 households (1,734 people) start/resume income-generating activities. In this way, some households added to their revenue and managed to cover their daily dietary requirements.

Using ICRC-supplied agricultural/fishing tools or livestock, approximately 280 heads of returnee households (1,048 people), and 1,580 breadwinners (6,504 people) from rural areas, restored their food production, increased it by 25% and/or diversified their diet. This support also eased returnees' reintegration into their communities. An association of female victims of conflict developed a livelihood project with ICRC assistance; 18 heads of households (93 people) benefited.

Infrastructure improvements gave 2,187 IDPs, and nearly 15,800 residents from rural communities, including those affected by weapon contamination (see below), access to improved water/sanitation, shelter and other facilities; hygiene-promotion sessions helped residents decrease their risk of disease/illness. Three health centres enhanced their services with ad hoc ICRC rehabilitation works.

### **Health professionals strengthen their ability to provide care for victims of sexual violence**

With support from the National Society/ICRC, around 6,300 people, mostly health personnel, learnt more about their rights and duties; some 4,500 health staff and 160 facilities and vehicles received markers bearing the red cross emblem.

About 170 victims of sexual violence coped with their situation with the help of psychological care. Through training, almost 350 health professionals from various institutions serving around 1,000 people in 43 municipalities strengthened their ability to provide mental-health care and psychosocial support, particularly for victims of sexual violence.

### **By attending school, children become less exposed to the consequences of conflict/violence**

During National Society/ICRC workshops on weapon contamination, nearly 18,200 people – members of the community, local authorities and people from academic institutions – learnt more about safe practices and victims' rights. Construction/rehabilitation of aqueducts and other infrastructure close to their homes helped around 5,200 people mitigate the threat of mines/ERW to them. Repairs/upgrades to 12 educational facilities in rural communities gave 2,519 children incentive to go to school, in turn minimizing their vulnerability to the consequences of conflict/violence.

### **Families perform burials for formerly missing relatives**

People separated from their families, including minors formerly associated with armed groups, restored contact with their relatives through the Movement's family-links services.

ICRC support helped local institutions facilitate their management and identification of human remains. This included the collection of biological samples from the families of missing persons, training for nearly 170 emergency responders and cemetery workers, and the construction of vaults in one cemetery. Forensic experts/institutions and the judicial authorities incorporated the ICRC's recommendations in their forensic procedures, which included a protocol for managing dismembered bodies.

At the request of the families of missing persons, the authorities received 10 sets of human remains recovered by the ICRC for identification. Sixteen families who had already ascertained their relatives' fate performed dignified burials for them, with ICRC assistance.

### **Relatives of missing persons cope with their situation through psychosocial support**

Some 150 families of missing persons eased their suffering with psychosocial care, either provided directly by health-care personnel or through ICRC-trained local partners. A National Society focal point in one town facilitated the creation of a support group for relatives of 20 missing persons; this enabled members of the group to provide psychosocial support for each other and gave them a venue where they could discuss their legal and economic needs. An ICRC handbook helped raise awareness of the rights of missing persons' families among the authorities and the families.

Inter-institutional events on missing persons strengthened coordination among stakeholders. Over 96 public/military prosecutors, investigators and forensic experts convened at ICRC-organized seminars to discuss the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the issue of missing persons, notably in relation to forensics and to legal/psychosocial assistance for the families concerned.

## **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

### **Penitentiary instructors train to teach international human rights law to their colleagues**

Nearly 85,200 detainees, among them 6,150 women and 1,468 minors, received ICRC visits according to the organization's standard

procedures, aimed at monitoring their treatment, living conditions and access to health care. The authorities received confidential oral/written feedback based on these visits, including on the need to detain people close to their homes, as well as technical support; these inputs helped the authorities ensure that detainees' treatment and living conditions conformed with internationally recognized standards.

The justice ministry and the penitentiary authorities reviewed or began to revise their manuals, such as one on the use of force in detention. A draft of the national minimum standards for prison design was submitted to the ICRC for comment, particularly in connection with the detention conditions of women and minors. The health ministry set up an inter-sectoral working group for training prison health staff.

Police/ICRC-trained instructors from penitentiary facilities developed their capacity to teach to their colleagues international human rights law and international standards on the use of force in law enforcement, primarily with regard to detention. A training module, designed by the ICRC and stakeholders of the juvenile penal system, sought to develop the latter's capacity to apply laws protecting minors associated with armed groups.

### **Some new arrivals at one prison receive improved medical check-ups**

The penitentiary authorities and the ICRC launched a project to address issues related to judicial guarantees, health and infrastructure, faced by inmates in the country's largest prison. As a result, some inmates benefited from improved medical examinations on their arrival, and the staff received a monitoring system to help them maintain various facilities at the prison and ensure their long-term functioning. Efforts to help assure detainees' judicial guarantees ceased, owing to the State's limited human and financial resources.

Detainees communicated with relatives through RCMs. Under the ICRC's auspices, six adolescents formerly associated with an armed group and detained by the government were transferred to a State welfare institution, and 21 people held by armed groups were released and handed over to their families.

## **WOUNDED AND SICK**

### **Four academic institutions incorporate war-surgery courses in their curricula**

Around 2,200 people from communities with an average population of 450,000 strengthened their first-aid skills at training sessions. Similarly, 828 health personnel, including 89 from armed groups, learnt more about weapon-wound management; a survey conducted afterwards showed that 76% of the participants had already applied what they had learnt, and that 83% had passed on their skills to colleagues.

Medical students at university attended war-surgery courses offered by four academic institutions that had incorporated the subject in their curricula. A regional conference organized by the Colombian Surgical Association and the ICRC enabled 216 health personnel to learn more about weapon-wound management from experts.

Some 1,400 wounded/sick people obtained adequate health care with the ICRC's financial assistance.

### **More physical rehabilitation centres receive ICRC support**

More physical rehabilitation centres and wheelchair production facilities than in the previous year benefited from comprehensive

ICRC support, in line with the organization's aim of bringing good-quality rehabilitative care closer to disabled persons. Staff from supported facilities, and from various educational institutions, developed their skills through technical advice/training.

Over 12,500 disabled persons, including 31 detainees, regained their mobility at six partner centres. The most vulnerable had their transport, accommodation and treatment costs covered by the ICRC.

With the ICRC's help, the authorities adopted a resolution to implement good practices among providers of prosthetic/orthotic services. They also received encouragement to include weapon-wounded people and victims of mines/ERW in the national welfare system.

## **ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

### **Military produces practical IHL guide for its field instructors**

Dialogue between the authorities, weapon bearers and the ICRC continued, with a view to facilitating, for the organization and for health services, safe and unhindered access to communities affected by conflict/violence (see *Civilians*).

In line with an agreement with the ICRC to include provisions of IHL and international human rights law in its new doctrine, the armed forces produced a practical guide to applying IHL and other relevant laws in their operations; the guide was prepared on the basis of operational reviews conducted in 2014 and distributed to field instructors. Military personnel continued to assess the compliance of their operations with IHL, in accordance with a defence ministry directive. A senior official participated in an international workshop on rules governing military operations (see *International law and policy*). The military forces and national police produced a protocol on preventing sexual violence during armed conflict, and among its personnel.

Twenty-six prosecutors, including from Medellín, and military legal advisers and police officers, learnt how to better prepare for IHL-related cases by studying ongoing cases of alleged IHL violations, during a workshop organized by the defence ministry and the prosecutor general with ICRC support.

At ICRC workshops, some 100 military/police officials and 500 policemen in Medellín furthered their understanding of the proper conduct of law enforcement operations.

### **Government issues decree to assist the families of missing persons**

Representatives of national IHL committees in the Americas region, as well as those of other countries and regional organizations, gathered at a conference organized by the Colombian government, the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC. They discussed several IHL-related topics, including the humanitarian consequences of the use of certain weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty, cooperation among national IHL committees in the region, and States' positions on topics to be covered by the 32nd International Conference. In particular, in preparation for the International Conference, the Colombian authorities and the National Society/ICRC discussed the state of implementation of IHL-related domestic legislation, and the government's support for a resolution on the Health Care in Danger project.

Technical advice and encouragement from the ICRC facilitated the creation or development of national frameworks related to IHL

and other internationally recognized norms (see *People deprived of their freedom*). The authorities issued a decree aimed at strengthening the State's capacity to identify and preserve human remains and at assisting families of the missing through, for example, the organization of commemorative events. Colombia ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

ICRC participation in university courses and events on IHL encouraged academics to promote the subject among their peers and students.

### Thousands of people complete a National Society/ICRC online course in basic IHL

Workshops helped more than 120 journalists learn more about the protection afforded to them by IHL. National and international media published key messages on the consequences of conflict/violence, drawing on information from ICRC materials, including articles posted on the delegation's website and other social media accounts. Some 16,000 people learnt the basic principles of IHL by completing an online course, launched by the National Society/ICRC on the National Society's website.

An ICRC campaign celebrating 100 years of the organization's detention activities in Colombia broadened awareness, among the pertinent authorities and other parties concerned, of the need to address humanitarian issues in detention facilities.

Information sessions helped members of the international community stay abreast of the ICRC's activities for communities affected by conflict/violence.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Colombian Red Cross remained the ICRC's main partner in responding to the needs of people affected by conflict/violence (see *Civilians* and *Wounded and sick*). It bolstered its ability to do so with ICRC technical and financial support; for example, nearly 400 volunteers trained in conducting vulnerability and capacity assessments and in incorporating the Safer Access Framework in their activities.

Efforts to reinforce Movement coordination continued, through the exchange of security/operational information and by other means.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION	Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>		UAMs/SC*		
RCMs collected	50	31		
RCMs distributed	34	7		
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>				
People transferred/repatriated	21			
Human remains transferred/repatriated	11			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>		Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	359	65	42	70
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	7			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	132			
<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 (people)	478	52	41	81
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	7			
<b>Documents</b>				
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines	2			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>ICRC visits</b>		Women	Minors	
Detainees visited	85,175	6,150	1,468	
		Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually	517	19	6	33
Detainees newly registered	185	8	6	30
Number of visits carried out	132			
Number of places of detention visited	50			
<b>Restoring family links</b>				
RCMs collected	19			
RCMs distributed	5			

\*Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	6,799	32%	38%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2,516		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,840	33%	37%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	3,224		
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	27,116	28%	45%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	4,402		
Cash	Beneficiaries	90,379	33%	38%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	85,197		
Services and training	Beneficiaries	78,740	34%	38%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	76,466		
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	17,887	29%	42%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	2,187		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	4		
<b>Health</b>				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		12		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		4		
Number of health facilities supported in places of detention visited by health staff		1		
<b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>				
<b>Hospitals</b>				
Hospitals supported	Structures	17		
Patients whose hospital treatment has been paid for by the ICRC	Patients	1,470		
<b>First aid</b>				
First-aid posts supported	Structures	1		
<b>Water and habitat</b>				
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds	99		
<b>Physical rehabilitation</b>				
Projects supported	Structures	9		
Patients receiving services	Patients	12,551	4,951	3,033
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	332	70	25
Prostheses delivered	Units	675	158	55
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	71		
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	3,855	774	2,116
Orthoses delivered	Units	5,789	1,431	2,838
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	8		
Patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	7,161	3,861	553
Crutches delivered	Units	426		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	899		