

The multiple tasks and activities of the UN often have implications of a humanitarian nature. Operating since 1983, the ICRC delegation to the UN serves as a support and a liaison for ICRC operational and legal initiatives. The delegation conveys the ICRC's viewpoint and keeps updated on trends and developments relating to humanitarian issues and promotes IHL.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ The ICRC addressed the UN General Assembly and the Security Council, emphasizing such matters as IHL and the protection of the civilian population; this helped shape the content of several key UN resolutions.
- ▶ The ICRC contributed to multilateral mechanisms on the future of humanitarian action, helping ensure that IHL was reflected in output documents, as in the case of the agenda adopted by the UN on housing and urban development.
- ▶ UN officials and representatives of Member States learnt more about the ICRC's views on the situation in Iraq, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, and the Lake Chad region, and the organization's work there.
- ▶ The ICRC kept abreast of developments in the humanitarian field, which influenced decision-making processes throughout the organization and helped strengthen field activities.

## YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

## EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	-
Assistance	-
Prevention	2,772
Cooperation with National Societies	-
General	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,772</b>
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>169</i>

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	96%
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	9

## CONTEXT

The UN and the wider international community grappled with the consequences of the numerous armed conflicts and other situations of violence throughout the world – the difficulties of protecting and assisting civilians during the heavy clashes in eastern Aleppo in the Syrian Arab Republic (hereafter Syria) in December 2016 exemplified the roadblocks faced by humanitarian workers.

The international community discussed the future of humanitarian and development assistance, tackling such matters as the Sustainable Development Goals and the need for longer-term and more systematic responses to protracted conflicts. In September 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which affirmed Member States' commitment to strengthening mechanisms to protect people on the move.

The UN General Assembly appointed its new secretary-general at the end of 2016.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The New York delegation stayed in regular contact with UN bodies, Member States and observers, and civil society organizations, which enabled it to draw attention to pressing humanitarian concerns and to call for greater respect for IHL. The ICRC drew on its field experiences to concretize policy and other discussions and to contribute to the drafting of UN resolutions and guidelines, and other documents with bearing on humanitarian issues.

As a permanent observer at the UN, the ICRC maintained a regular presence at Security Council and General Assembly events. It addressed the Security Council as an expert briefer on several occasions: it reiterated the legal obligation of conflict parties to ensure that people under their control had access to essential goods and services and that those seeking or providing medical care must be spared from attack. This enabled the ICRC to contribute to the content of the Security Council's resolution on medical care in armed conflict.

The ICRC made statements to the General Assembly on the necessity of: addressing the specific needs of displaced people, women and children; upholding the rule of law and universal jurisdiction; and working towards a ban on nuclear weapons. In each instance, it emphasized the need to consider these issues from a humanitarian perspective and to take an apolitical approach to meeting the needs of victims.

The ICRC continued to cooperate with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), providing feedback on IHL-related matters, particularly in the context of peacekeeping operations. The DPKO and the ICRC held consultations on the former's revision of its professional standards for protection work, and developed, for the DPKO's use, a training tool on the protection of the civilian population.

The ICRC closely followed and participated in a number of multi-lateral mechanisms and events of consequence to humanitarian work, such as the World Humanitarian Summit, the UN Summit Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (known as Habitat III). Through its participation in these forums, the ICRC contributed to shaping the international humanitarian agenda and the discussion of related matters – for instance,

displacement and migration, protracted conflict in urban areas, and the nexus between humanitarian and development work.

The ICRC also sought direct engagement with UN officials and representatives of Member States at regular meetings, some of which were held bilaterally. These included the events attended by the ICRC's president, for example, the high-level events that took place on the sidelines of the General Assembly's regular session; the delegation also had monthly meetings with the president of the Security Council. ICRC delegates frequently delivered briefings on the organization's views on contexts where it had extensive operations, such as Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and the Lake Chad region. The ICRC and the New York University School of Law jointly organized their annual seminar on IHL for diplomats, which was attended by over 100 State officials.

The ICRC continued to coordinate closely with other organizations and UN-affiliated consortia, and with Movement partners. To increase public awareness of its priorities and activities, the ICRC also maintained its ties to New York-based NGOs, think-tanks and academic institutions. It strengthened its public communication work by stepping up its presence on social media and reinforcing its contacts among UN-accredited media.

Such interaction helped decision-makers at various levels deepen their understanding of the ICRC's distinct mandate and approach. It also helped the ICRC stay abreast of developments in humanitarian affairs, which contributed to streamlining organizational decision-making and field activities.

## ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Through its regular engagement with the UN and its bodies and Member States, the ICRC helped ensure that IHL and humanitarian issues were given due consideration and reflected in these entities' decision-making, resolutions, policies and documents.

### ICRC speaks out at UN events and calls for greater respect for IHL

The ICRC addressed the Security Council as an expert briefer on several occasions. During the Council's open debate on the protection of the civilian population, the organization made the link between respect for IHL and the gravity of suffering borne by conflict victims; it emphasized the obligation of conflict parties to meet the basic needs of people under their control and to allow the delivery of aid to civilians in need. The ICRC also discussed the protection due to health-care services – in the run-up to the Council's adoption of a strongly worded resolution on the subject and during a subsequent discussion on the UN secretary-general's recommendations for implementing the resolution. During the Security Council debate on peacekeeping operations, the ICRC's president stressed that discussions on the technical aspects of the applicability of IHL should not preclude the objective of impeccable respect for IHL by all actors.

The ICRC also spoke out at the General Assembly's regular session and at committee debates to draw attention to such humanitarian issues as: the specific needs of displaced people, women and children and the importance of the rule of law and universal jurisdiction; the ICRC urged Member States to decisively work towards a ban on nuclear weapons and the total elimination of these weapons.

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### **DPKO and ICRC work together to develop a training module on the protection of civilians**

The DPKO and the ICRC developed, for the former's use, a training module on the protection of civilians; the DPKO also received feedback for the revision of its professional standards for protection work. The joint workshop planned by the two organizations was postponed to 2017.

During briefings and consultations, the DPKO, the General Assembly's special committee on peacekeeping operations, the OLA and the ICRC discussed such matters as the legal and operational dimensions of humanitarian access, IHL in the context of peacekeeping and the ICRC's protection work around the world.

### **High-level interaction helps develop ties with emerging actors**

The ICRC's regular meetings with UN officials and representatives of Member States, including monthly meetings with the president of the Security Council, allowed for in-depth exchanges of views. At four high-level events on the sidelines of the General Assembly's regular session, the ICRC explained its perspective on the situations in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, and the Lake Chad region, and described its work in those places. UN Member States also consulted the ICRC on various matters to be discussed at the Security Council or the General Assembly. The ICRC president's meetings with regional leaders and representatives of emerging States contributed to the organization-wide effort to expand relationships with all humanitarian stakeholders.

Over 100 State representatives discussed respect for IHL and the outcomes of the 32nd International Conference during the annual seminar on IHL for diplomats organized by the New York University School of Law and the ICRC. A series of events on international law – hosted by the General Assembly's committee on legal issues – gave the ICRC an opportunity to reach out to State legal advisers and diplomats and discuss IHL compliance and the applicability of this body of law to counter-terrorism efforts, detention, and other contemporary humanitarian concerns.

### **ICRC helps set the international humanitarian agenda**

The ICRC participated in various multilateral mechanisms and events – hosted by UN agencies, NGOs, think-tanks and others – which enabled it to monitor policy developments and, when appropriate, to contribute its perspective on key issues. These occasions included agenda-setting events, such as the World Humanitarian Summit, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the UN Economic and Social Council, the UN Summit Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and Habitat III, during which developments in humanitarian needs and action were discussed. The ICRC used these opportunities to draw attention to the need for: a new global response paradigm to protracted conflicts, particularly those taking place in urban areas; multi-year funding commitments to ensure that humanitarian agencies are able to implement long-term responses; better protection and assistance mechanisms for displaced people, whether they cross State borders or not; and more space for principled and neutral humanitarian action.

Through such interaction, the ICRC helped strengthen the language and content of outcome documents: the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants reflected IHL-based points raised by the ICRC; the New Urban Agenda on housing and development, adopted by Habitat III, specifically recognized the impact of protracted conflict on urban services and populations and called for greater respect for IHL.

The ICRC was in regular contact with Movement partners and UN-affiliated humanitarian organizations to further understanding of each other's roles, and positions on pertinent issues, and of the ICRC's distinct mandate. Other organizations also drew on the ICRC for guidance on IHL-related matters. These discussions contributed to the ICRC's own analysis of operational and other issues, and helped strengthen its field activities.

### **Future decision-makers learn more about humanitarian principles and the Movement**

UN-accredited media drew on the ICRC's press releases and on presentations by its senior staff on key issues to cover its activities. At ICRC events, future lawyers, decision-makers and leaders advanced their understanding of IHL. The delegation continued to streamline its communication activities, stepping up its presence on social media and intensifying its engagement with the public.