

MEXICO CITY (regional)

COVERING: Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama



ICRC/AR_2016
 ○ ICRC regional delegation ♦ ICRC mission ▽ ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation project

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ Thousands of vulnerable migrants along the migration route found respite at facilities run by the National Societies and the ICRC, which provided drinking water, temporary accommodations, and health and family-links services.
- ▶ Violence-affected people in four countries had access to health services and water, owing to various forms of ICRC support; young people in El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico obtained psychosocial and/or educational assistance.
- ▶ With ICRC encouragement, a Mexican state enacted a law on the forensic management of missing persons' remains. Families in Guatemala arranged or attended dignified burials for relatives who were once unaccounted for.
- ▶ Detainees in Honduras and Panama had better living conditions after the ICRC upgraded infrastructure. ICRC activities in Salvadorean prisons were suspended in May after the implementation of stricter detention measures there.
- ▶ Military and police instructors in the region developed their ability to teach their peers about international policing standards. Cuba acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and El Salvador to the Rome Statute.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	5,410
Assistance	9,210
Prevention	3,112
Cooperation with National Societies	1,359
General	192
Total	19,282
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>1,177</i>

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	101%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	41
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	140

The Mexico delegation opened in 1998, becoming a regional delegation in 2002. It helps the region's National Societies strengthen their capacities and works with them to address the most urgent humanitarian needs of persons affected by organized violence and of vulnerable migrants; monitors detainees' conditions; and endeavours to ascertain the fate of missing persons. It encourages the integration of IHL into armed forces' doctrine and into universities' curricula, and human rights norms applicable to the use of force into the doctrine, training and operations of security forces. The delegation hosts the regional advisory service on IHL.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action **HIGH**

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	5
RCMs distributed	18
Phone calls facilitated between family members	82,869
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)	4
People reunited with their families	5
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	42,451
Detainees visited and monitored individually	12
Number of visits carried out	82
Number of places of detention visited	39
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	34
RCMs distributed	8
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	28

ASSISTANCE	2016 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme) ¹		
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	30,000
Cash	Beneficiaries	245
Services and training	Beneficiaries	150
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	51,500
		84,993
Health		
Health centres supported	Structures	6
		13
WOUNDED AND SICK		
Hospitals		
Hospitals supported	Structures	3
		1
Water and habitat		
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds	158
Physical rehabilitation		
Projects supported	Projects	10
		7
Patients receiving services	Patients	7,686

1. Owing to operational and management constraints, figures presented in this table and in the narrative part of this report may not reflect the extent of the activities carried out during the reporting period.

CONTEXT

Some communities in the region – particularly in El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico – continued to suffer the effects of high levels of armed violence: murders, disappearances, displacement, migration and insufficient access to basic services such as health and education. Military troops supported the police in law enforcement operations that led to casualties and arrests. In El Salvador, family contact was disrupted and an increase in TB cases recorded in six prisons housing over 20,000 detainees, after the authorities imposed stricter security measures there in order to curb gang violence.

Many people continued to seek safety and better opportunities elsewhere. Migrants heading for or deported from the United States of America risked abuse and other dangers along their route. Stricter migration policies, notably in Mexico, and the closing of borders in Nicaragua and between Colombia and Panama complicated their journey. An upsurge of economic migrants from Cuba and Haiti put added pressure on the host countries, as they had to address these migrants' needs.

Families throughout the region continued to seek information about relatives who went missing in relation to migration, past armed conflict and ongoing situations of violence.

Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Otto in Costa Rica and Panama, struck some countries in the region.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The regional delegation in Mexico City continued to focus on protecting and assisting migrants, missing people's families and other violence-affected people. It maintained close cooperation with the National Societies in the region and helped them boost their capacity to aid these people and to reach and work in violence-prone areas safely.

People travelling the migration route through Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico eased their journey at facilities supported by the National Societies and the ICRC; they also learnt, from informational materials, how to reduce the risk to their safety. These facilities provided them with health-care services, temporary accommodations and/or means to contact relatives. Minors and their relatives traveled back to Guatemala and Honduras with cash assistance. The launching or expansion of some of these activities in El Salvador, Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico and Panama sought to respond to the influx of migrants in the region.

The ICRC provided support for local partners to become more effective in searching for missing persons and in addressing their families' needs. Technical and infrastructural support enabled forensic personnel in four countries to strengthen their capacity to manage and identify human remains. Families in Guatemala arranged or attended dignified burials for relatives who were once unaccounted for, with ICRC financial support. One Mexican state enacted a law on the forensic identification and management of missing people's remains.

To help ensure that wounded, sick and other violence-affected people in five countries could obtain good-quality health care, the ICRC offered training and material support for first-responders and health personnel. It also upgraded facilities at primary-health-care centres in Mexico and Panama, and began to do the same in one hospital in Honduras. Disabled people, including

migrants, regained their mobility at ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres. Psychosocial or psychological care provided by ICRC-supported local partners helped violence-affected people – including schoolchildren and victims of sexual violence – and missing people's families to cope. Communities in remote areas of Guatemala, Honduras and Panama benefited from water and sanitation systems renovated or constructed by the ICRC.

In El Salvador and Honduras, the ICRC began to support initiatives assisting IDPs. It provided material aid to displaced households in El Salvador, and legal advice to Honduran officials in devising legal frameworks for implementing a multidisciplinary emergency response to IDPs' needs.

In five countries, detainees – such as migrants and people held in connection with incidents of violence – received visits in accordance with standard ICRC procedures. These visits were suspended in El Salvador in May, after stricter detention measures took effect in some prisons. In Mexico, a partnership agreement with the authorities included the possibility of ICRC visits to people in federal prisons. The authorities concerned drew on ICRC support to improve detainees' treatment and living conditions. Officials in Honduras began judicial reviews of detainees' cases to expedite legal procedures; in El Salvador, the authorities announced steps to tackle TB in the prisons affected by stricter detention measures. ICRC support for infrastructural upgrades and for prison health staff resulted in better living conditions and/or health care for detainees in Honduras and Panama.

To further understanding of and support for humanitarian principles, IHL and the Movement, the ICRC maintained dialogue with and organized specific events for pertinent authorities and organizations and the wider public throughout the region. Aided by ICRC expertise, the military and the police strengthened their instructors' capacity to train peers in international policing standards. Cuba and El Salvador acceded to IHL-related treaties. An IHL course was included in the curriculum of the law school at a Mexican university.

CIVILIANS

The ICRC engaged the parties concerned in discussions on the plight of migrants, families of missing persons and other violence-affected people – including IDPs in El Salvador. Where appropriate, it reported allegations of abuse to these parties, with a view to preventing their recurrence and facilitating humanitarian access to these vulnerable people.

Migrants and deportees ease their journey with material aid and family-links services

Migrants and deportees travelling the migration route through Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico benefited from comprehensive assistance – some of them more than once – at facilities supported by the National Societies and the ICRC, in coordination with other humanitarian agencies. Leaflets and radio spots informed them of how to reduce the risk to their safety and where the various assistance points were.

Over 70,000 people had access to potable water following the distribution of bottled water and water-purifying chlorine tablets; several returnee minors covered some of their dietary needs with food provisions. Eighteen NGO-run shelters in Mexico that had been upgraded by the ICRC offered free temporary accommodations. About 28,300 migrants obtained free health services,

including psychological care, at 11 ICRC-supported facilities; the ICRC covered treatment costs for those needing medical and rehabilitative care (see *Wounded and sick*).

Migrants informed their families of their situation via nearly 83,000 free phone calls from 48 family-contact points, ten of which began operations in 2016. One Guatemalan Red Cross shelter – built with ICRC financial support – temporarily housed 587 unaccompanied returnee minors, and their relatives who came to pick them up. In Guatemala and Honduras, cash assistance helped over 200 returnee minors and their relatives to travel home.

The pertinent authorities, organizations and National Societies responded to the influx of migrants in the region (see *Context*) by working with the ICRC to launch or expand some of the activities mentioned above. In El Salvador, Costa Rica and Panama, migrants received informational materials translated in their languages that detailed how to minimize the risks to their safety while travelling and where to find assistance. Ad hoc ICRC material aid to two medical centres in Honduras and Mexico helped staff provide more effective care for migrants.

Families in Guatemala bury relatives who were located after years of being unaccounted for

State agencies, humanitarian actors and associations of missing people's families drew on ICRC support – tracing services, for instance – to search more effectively for missing persons, including migrants, and to address the needs of their families (see *Actors of influence*).

Various parties concerned convened at international events in Cuba and Mexico – organized or supported by the ICRC – to discuss and recommend best practices in forensics. Aided by the ICRC or by ICRC-supported trainers, over 770 forensic personnel and investigators and other pertinent officials in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico developed their ability to: collect information on missing persons; standardize forensic data management; and identify human remains. ICRC material and infrastructural support for morgues and burial niches in parts of Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico contributed to the dignified burial of unidentified remains. In Mexico, such support enabled the documentation of human remains in line with best practices and the identification of some of them. Guatemalan and Salvadorean officials recorded missing-persons cases using the ICRC's data-management software; the Mexican authorities pursued the installation of this software in public prosecutors' offices.

In Guatemala, around 1,750 families used financial and technical support from the ICRC to arrange or attend dignified burials for relatives who were located after years of being unaccounted for or to follow up cases of missing relatives with the authorities concerned. Psychosocial or psychological care from ICRC-supported services helped other families there and in Honduras and Mexico to cope with their distress. In Honduras, 20 psychologists were trained to support associations of families of missing persons.

Students, teachers and communities learn to cope more effectively with the consequences of violence

Vulnerable violence-affected people dealt with their situation through various forms of assistance provided by the pertinent authorities and National Society, and the ICRC. A project in Chihuahua, Mexico – run by the education ministry, the National Society and the ICRC – taught students and teachers at 13 schools

how to cope more effectively with the consequences of violence. Nearly 200 teachers helped a total of 22,750 students to ease their distress and instructed them on techniques for protecting themselves against violence; the teachers were trained by the health ministry, the National Society and the ICRC. Some of the project's beneficiaries reported that they were less depressed and anxious and that they felt safer in their schools and residences. The education authorities in Chihuahua began incorporating elements of the project in these schools' curricula.

National Society and ICRC projects in violence-prone urban areas of El Salvador and Honduras helped create access for 25,860 people to first aid and psychosocial assistance and to recreational and educational activities.

IDPs in El Salvador cover their material needs

Sixty displaced households in El Salvador met their basic needs with household items provided by the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the ICRC; NGOs assisting displaced families also received material support. Over 5,300 people in remote areas of Guatemala, Honduras and Panama benefited from upgraded or newly constructed water and sanitation systems. Through training or information sessions, 28 community workers in Honduras strengthened their hygiene-promotion skills, and 4,200 people learnt to protect themselves from contagious diseases and to refer sick people to appropriate services. These activities in Honduras ended in August, owing to the improved security situation there.

ICRC-upgraded health facilities in Tamaulipas state, Mexico, and in the Darién region of Panama, and health ministry and ICRC brigades in Darién, provided primary health care for vulnerable people. Victims of violence – including of sexual violence – and National Society volunteers received psychosocial or psychological support from trained teachers and Mexican Red Cross volunteers in Mexico and at a health facility in Guatemala. Health-centre staff in Mexico learnt more effective methods of self-protection during ICRC workshops on the Health Care in Danger project.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

ICRC visits to detainees in El Salvador are suspended

Detainees in El Salvador, Honduras and Panama – including people held in connection with incidents of violence – and migrants in holding centres in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama received visits conducted in accordance with standard ICRC procedures. However, visits to detainees in El Salvador were suspended in May, after stricter detention measures went into effect in some prisons (see *Context*). In Mexico, the ICRC signed an agreement with penitentiary officials on prospective partnerships; the agreement included the possibility of visiting people in federal prisons.

Honduran officials begin judicial reviews of cases to expedite legal procedures

After the visits mentioned above, the ICRC discussed its findings confidentially with the authorities, who drew on ICRC expertise to address issues concerning detainees' treatment and living conditions, particularly the effects of prison overcrowding. ICRC oral and written representations to the Salvadorean authorities on the effects of the stricter detention measures, and the impact on the ICRC's ability to assist detainees, led in part to the authorities' announcement of steps to tackle TB in prisons. An interministerial working group in Honduras began judicial reviews of cases and set up a new registration system for detainees in selected prisons, with a view to expediting legal procedures.

At various ICRC-organized events (see *Colombia*), detention officials from Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras and elsewhere in the region discussed humanitarian issues related to prison management; one seminar in Panama, on prison infrastructure, brought together 50 representatives from 12 Latin American countries.

Inmates reconnected with their relatives through the Movement's family-links services, which included family visits.

Detainees in Honduran and Panamanian prisons benefit from upgraded prison facilities

Approximately 13,000 inmates in Honduras and Panama had better living conditions after the authorities, with ICRC support, renovated water and electrical systems and other facilities. The ICRC formalized an agreement with the Panamanian interior ministry to implement an ICRC project to improve living conditions for inmates in selected prisons.

Honduran penitentiary and health officials and the ICRC signed a cooperation agreement to enhance detainees' access to comprehensive health services. ICRC-provided training and supplies for staff at selected prisons helped them provide more effective health care for inmates.

WOUNDED AND SICK

A Honduran hospital begins to upgrade its emergency room

To help ensure the availability of life-saving care for wounded people in Mexico, the National Society and the ICRC provided material support and training for potential first-responders and health staff. During ICRC workshops, surgical personnel and students in El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico strengthened their ability to operate on wounded people. A university in Honduras included weapon-wound management in its training curriculum.

The Tegucigalpa Teaching Hospital in Honduras used ICRC donations of medical equipment to improve treatment for victims of violence. ICRC upgrades to the hospital's emergency room got under way: the installation and refurbishment of a nursing station and sanitation facilities contributed to more comfortable and hygienic surroundings for patients; these improvements also helped facilitate infection-control measures. The hospital and the ICRC signed an agreement allowing ICRC surgeons to provide the hospital's doctors with on-site guidance and technical input in the management of weapon wounds.

Victims of unexploded ordnance and disabled migrants obtain rehabilitative care

Roughly 7,700 disabled persons – including migrants and mine victims – in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico regained their mobility at seven ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres. The ICRC covered treatment, transportation and accommodation costs for nearly 200 returnee migrants. In Honduras, 17 patients in one centre relieved some of their emotional distress with the help of ICRC-trained psychologists. The centres' staff improved their services with financial support and guidance from the ICRC.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Armed forces and police instructors learn to teach their peers about international policing standards

The region's armed forces and police drew on ICRC expertise to increase respect for international policing standards and

international human rights law in their respective training and doctrine. Around 11,300 military personnel with law enforcement duties and police officers in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Panama strengthened their knowledge of international policing standards at ICRC-organized seminars.

The Mexican federal police continued incorporating international policing standards in its officers' training curricula – in line with the findings of a 2015 ICRC assessment – and in its doctrine. At ICRC workshops in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama, police officers and military instructors refined their ability to teach their peers about international policing standards.

A Mexican state enacts a law on the forensic management of missing persons' remains

Authorities and members of national IHL committees in the region continued to promote and implement IHL at the national level, with ICRC support, such as financial input for their attendance at IHL events abroad (see *International law and policy*).

ICRC legal advice to government officials and lawyers focused on the incorporation in domestic legal frameworks of provisions on the repression of war crimes and the protection due to the red cross emblem and, in Honduras, of a multidisciplinary emergency response to IDPs' needs. Guatemalan officials worked to expand the mandate of a commission – responsible for searching for people missing in relation to past conflict – to include recent disappearances and missing migrants. The Mexican authorities sought to draft a law covering the needs of missing people and their families. One Mexican state enacted a law on the forensic identification and management of missing persons' remains.

Cuba acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and El Salvador to the Rome Statute.

The ICRC continued to raise humanitarian issues – especially those concerning migrants and detainees – during forums organized by regional and international organizations such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. At the Regional Conference on Migration, and during UNHCR-driven processes, ICRC recommendations for assisting migrants were included in the final texts adopted by Member States.

Law school at a Mexican university includes IHL in its curriculum

At conferences organized by two Cuban academic institutions, students and lecturers added to their knowledge of IHL during ICRC presentations. The law school at a Mexican university included IHL in its curriculum.

Communication efforts and events organized by the region's National Societies and the ICRC sought to broaden awareness of regional issues of growing humanitarian concern, and to foster support for ICRC activities, among government officials, members of civil society and humanitarian organizations. Drawing on ICRC communication and informational materials or presentations, journalists produced articles on the plight of missing people's families in Guatemala and Mexico. National Society dissemination sessions helped advance understanding of the Movement and its Fundamental Principles among violence-prone communities and the wider public.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Support from Movement partners helped the region's National Societies to strengthen their ability to respond to emergencies and to the needs of violence-affected people and vulnerable migrants – through family-links services, for instance (see *Civilians*). During briefings and workshops, over 5,300 National Society volunteers in Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua learnt about the Safer Access Framework, and 30 Costa Rica Red Cross volunteers were trained to apply it in their activities.

Twenty-two health staff from Cuba and nine from elsewhere bolstered their capacity to respond to large-scale health emergencies at a course in Cuba that was organized by the Cuban Red Cross, a local medical institution and the ICRC.

Technical advice from the ICRC helped the region's National Societies to improve their communication capacities and revise their statutes.

Movement components in the region coordinated their activities, for instance through a tripartite coordination mechanism in El Salvador; the ICRC contributed material aid and technical assistance to the Movement's response to various natural disasters (see, for example, *Lima*). Twenty-five National Societies from the Americas, the International Federation and the ICRC adopted a joint declaration that set out a unified and proactive Movement approach to the issue of migration.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
RCMs and other means of family contact			UAMs/SC		
RCMs collected		5	1		
RCMs distributed		18			
Phone calls facilitated between family members		82,869			
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations					
People reunited with their families		5			
	<i>including people registered by another delegation</i>	4			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		1			
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)		4			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		3			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		42,451	1,730	2,375	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		12			
Number of visits carried out		82			
Number of places of detention visited		39			
RCMs and other means of family contact					
RCMs collected		34			
RCMs distributed		8			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		28			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		5			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		4			

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)¹				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries			
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	63	14	17
Cash	Beneficiaries	245	8	225
Services and training	Beneficiaries	150	50	55
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	84,993		
Health				
Health centres supported	Structures	13		
Average catchment population		125,980		
Consultations		29,694		
	<i>of which curative</i>	29,655	3,228	1,277
	<i>of which antenatal</i>	39		
Referrals to a second level of care	Patients	157		
	<i>of whom gynaecological/obstetric cases</i>	1		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities ¹	Beneficiaries	19,405		
Health				
Visits carried out by health staff		29		
Places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	7		
Health facilities supported in places of detention visited by health staff	Structures	3		
WOUNDED AND SICK				
Hospitals				
Hospitals supported	Structures	1		
Water and habitat				
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds	158		
Physical rehabilitation				
Projects supported	Projects	7		
Patients receiving services	Patients	7,686	3,334	1,308
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	149	26	34
Prostheses delivered	Units	250	41	31
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	2		
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	852	78	669
Orthoses delivered	Units	1,141	56	992
Patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	5,781	3,106	299
Walking aids delivered	Units	139	34	18
Wheelchairs or tricycles delivered	Units	12		

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