



# philippines

In the Philippines, where the ICRC has been working since 1982, the delegation assists and protects civilians displaced or otherwise affected by armed clashes between the government and insurgent groups, primarily on the southern island of Mindanao. It acts as a neutral intermediary between opposing forces in humanitarian matters, visits security detainees and works with the Philippine National Red Cross, through its network of regional chapters and local branches, to assist displaced people and promote compliance with IHL.

## EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

|                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Protection                          | 1,769 |
| Assistance                          | 1,622 |
| Prevention                          | 962   |
| Cooperation with National Societies | 514   |
| General                             | -     |

► **4,867**

of which: *Overheads* 297

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Expenditure/yearly budget | 107% |
|---------------------------|------|

## PERSONNEL

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 13 | expatriates                                 |
| 73 | national staff (daily workers not included) |

## KEY POINTS

### In 2006, the ICRC:

- monitored the situation of civilians in conflict-affected areas and, where necessary, made oral and written representations to the relevant authorities; increased knowledge of and respect for IHL and Movement activities among various weapon bearers, including government troops and armed opposition and insurgent groups;
- provided food to 52,255 civilians and essential household items to 40,313 civilians in conflict-affected areas and carried out water and sanitation projects for IDPs, in cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross;
- visited 60,734 detainees, following up 457 individually and, with the National Society, enabling 249 to receive visits from family members; distributed hygiene items and other supplies and made urgent small-scale improvements to prison infrastructure;
- supported the surgical and medical treatment of 155 civilians wounded in armed clashes and bomb attacks;
- co-organized with the National Society a national symposium on the management of human remains following the deadly mudslide in southern Leyte in February;
- organized 2 war-surgery seminars in Manila and Zamboanga for 138 participants and another one on burn management for civilian and military surgeons and other medical professionals active in conflict-affected areas.

## CONTEXT

The Philippines faced more political turmoil in 2006. The Executive alleged there had been a coup plot by military officers who were arrested and placed under house arrest or in disciplinary detention while awaiting military judicial follow-up. In June, the government announced an increase in military spending.

The civilian population living in conflict-prone areas was affected by frequent armed clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups. The most violent clashes occurred in June in Maguindanao, displacing some 25,000 civilians. Targeted killings of opposition party leaders, journalists and human rights activists persisted, as did conflict-related incidents, albeit of low intensity. The government stepped up its counter-insurgency campaign throughout the country.

In November, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) announced that it would resume peace talks in Kuala Lumpur with the government, but without specifying a date. In parallel, discussions were held between the government and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to assess implementation of the 1996 final peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which was still igniting serious controversy 10 years after being signed.

The presence of armed groups considered to be affiliated with the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Jemaah Islamiyah continued to prompt military operations and arrests. In February and March, bombings attributed to the Abu Sayyaf Group took place in Jolo, creating new tensions in Sulu, already one of the most-affected provinces of the Mindanao region.

An international counter-“terrorism” experts’ conference was held in Cebu City in April, attended by representatives of more than 56 countries and several international organizations. It addressed a range of issues related to “terrorism” and government measures being used to combat indiscriminate acts of violence. The Cebu Concord, which was adopted on 22 April, acknowledged the need for strategies combating “terrorism” to respect IHL.

As happened in previous years, a string of typhoons late in the year devastated eastern and north-eastern Philippines.

## MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS

| PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses) |        | CIVILIANS AND PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM                   |               |        |
|--|--------|--|---------------|--------|
| Detainees visited  | 60,734 | <i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>                      |               |        |
| Detainees visited and monitored individually                   | 457    | Food   | Beneficiaries | 52,255 |
| Number of visits carried out                                   | 227    | Essential household items  | Beneficiaries | 58,430 |
| Number of places of detention visited                          | 125    | Water supply schemes and sanitation systems (completed projects) | Beneficiaries | 2,350  |
| <b>DOCUMENTS ISSUED</b>  |        | Habitat structures   | Beneficiaries | 12,594 |
| People to whom travel documents were issued                    | 11     | <i>Economic security, water and habitat</i>                      |               |        |
|  |        | Health centres supported   | Structures    | 2      |
|  |        | <b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>  |               |        |
|  |        | Admissions   | Patients      | 157    |
|  |        | <i>Physical rehabilitation</i>                                   |               |        |
|  |        | Patients receiving services                                      | Patients      | 20     |
|  |        | Prostheses delivered   | Pieces        | 20     |

## ICRC ACTION

The ICRC's main focus was to address the impact of insurgency and counter-insurgency operations on the civilian population. It expanded and consolidated its presence in conflict-affected areas in order to monitor the situation, assisted victims when necessary and made representations to the authorities and weapon bearers concerned regarding alleged violations of IHL. The ICRC also provided people affected by the violence with food and essential household items, in cooperation with the National Society. The ICRC worked to ensure access to safe water and proper sanitation facilities for the displaced. It covered the medical costs of people wounded in conflict-related incidents, provided supplies to hospitals treating such cases, and mobilized external resources and stakeholders.

ICRC delegates continued visits to people held in connection with insurgency and to military officials held in connection with attempted insurrections. They assessed detainees' treatment and conditions of detention, paying special attention to the needs of women, minors, the elderly and the sick. Small ad hoc improvements were made to prison infrastructure, such as increasing ventilation and installing bunk beds, to alleviate the severe overcrowding, and hygiene and recreational items were distributed in 57 jails. It also assisted the prison administration in mobilizing government support for further improvements.

The ICRC pursued efforts to promote knowledge of and respect for IHL among the armed forces, police and various armed groups. Given the pervasiveness of violence in the Philippines, the ICRC concentrated on dissemination at field level. Field

contacts with other humanitarian organizations and local NGOs were expanded to enhance coordination in responding to the needs of conflict victims. Dissemination sessions were also held for representatives of these organizations to explain the ICRC's role and mandate.

Sessions on IHL were conducted for local authorities, as well as for college and university students. Law students and lecturers from various higher-education establishments participated in regional IHL events. The ICRC participated in national forums on the legal aspects of recruitment of child soldiers and initiated bilateral discussions with relevant authorities to support the implementation of the rules and regulations of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, which entered into force in May 2006.

The Philippine National Red Cross continued to be an essential partner for the ICRC in its operations. Likewise, the ICRC supported the National Society's efforts to assist the victims of the deadly landslide in southern Leyte in February and of the typhoons in the central islands in December, in particular in the fields of tracing and water supply. In addition, the ICRC continued to assist the National Society's capacity-building efforts. It supported training in dissemination and water and sanitation activities, and co-organized with the National Society a national symposium on the proper handling, both technically and culturally, of large numbers of human remains following major disasters.

## CIVILIANS

The ICRC consolidated its presence in Luzon, Mindanao and Visayas, with a particular focus on Sulu. Regular contact was established and maintained with the military, insurgent groups, local government authorities, residents, the Church and other influential members of civil society in order to receive timely reports on the evolving humanitarian situation. Whenever possible, and on a case-by-case basis, the ICRC's concerns regarding the increased regularity of armed incidents were communicated to weapon bearers and civilian authorities, as were their obligations under IHL.

**Assisting the displaced and residents**

Integrated protection and economic-security missions enabled the ICRC to monitor closely the needs of IDPs and of the civilian population affected by violence throughout the country. Civilians in Luzon, Mindanao and Visayas with no or limited access to their means of livelihood received some or all of the following: rice, sardines, noodles, salt, sugar, coffee, tarpaulins, kitchen utensils, mats, blankets, jerrycans and soap. The relief operations were carried out in cooperation with the respective local Red Cross chapter.

- 52,255 civilians affected by armed violence received food and 40,313 received essential household items during 34 distributions
- 2,350 people in 5 evacuation centres assessed by the ICRC in Maguindanao and Sulu provinces benefited from improvements to their water supply and sanitation conditions such as the construction of latrines, drilling of new wells and installation of water pumps; 2,800 people in 4 additional centres were benefiting from ongoing projects

## PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

ICRC delegates continued to visit detainees held in facilities under the responsibility of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), the provincial authorities and the Bureau of Corrections. Following the declaration of the state of emergency, visits were organized to several military and police camps inside and outside Manila during the year. Confidential reports were submitted to the authorities following the visits. Particularly vulnerable detainees, such as minors, women, the elderly and the sick, were closely monitored by the ICRC. The prison authorities used ICRC recommendations to implement improvements. Detainees received visits from their relatives as part of a joint ICRC/National Society programme that had been running since 1982. More than half of the 93 Red Cross chapters were involved in arranging family visits.

- ▶ 60,734 detainees visited, 457 (31 females, 8 minors) of them monitored individually, including 137 (19 females, 7 minors) newly registered, during 227 visits to 125 places of detention
- ▶ 249 detainees visited by family members

Several surveys of the causes of judicial delays and the consequences of prison overcrowding were undertaken. The BJMP welcomed the ICRC's proposal to produce a synthesis report to help in mobilizing support for prison reform.

### Improving living conditions

Detainees benefited from ICRC-supported water and habitat projects carried out in collaboration with the BJMP and the Bureau of Corrections to improve living conditions in prisons. The health of detainees in 23 jails in Luzon and Visayas and 35 jails in Mindanao was monitored by the ICRC, and the authorities alerted to any problems. The ICRC repeatedly stressed the importance of a balanced diet and preventive health care for detainees. Prisons where detainees displayed symptoms of beriberi were given a supply of thiamine.

- ▶ 16,637 inmates benefited from completed (12,594 inmates in 11 jails) and ongoing (4,043 inmates in 11 other jails) habitat projects
- ▶ 18,117 detainees received hygiene and/or cleaning materials, games, books, recreational items, medical supplies and/or kitchen utensils
- ▶ 413 inmates received medical assistance in the form of medicines, crutches or payment of laboratory fees

- ▶ infirmaries in 3 Metro Manila jails and 8 jails in Mindanao received assistance in the form of medical supplies and equipment, such as masks, gloves, disinfectant, weighing scales and nebulizers

## WOUNDED AND SICK

The ICRC continued to assess the needs and support the medical treatment of victims of armed clashes and other violent incidents.

In order to boost the limited capacity of health facilities in violence-prone regions to treat the wounded, medical supplies were placed in stock at the Sulu chapter of the National Society and tetanus vaccines were pre-positioned in 15 Mindanao chapters. Some medical equipment was also donated to a tertiary hospital and a Red Cross chapter.

Two bombing incidents in Sulu early in the year, killing 10 people and injuring more than 50, strained the resources of the health facilities in the area. To increase their capacity to cope with mass casualty incidents of this kind, health professionals attended seminars organized by the ICRC. In coordination with hospital authorities in the area, initial steps were also taken to set up another burn unit to cater to victims from western Mindanao.

- ▶ a total of 61 medical doctors of various specializations and 77 nurses and army health professionals attended 2 war-surgery seminars in Manila and Zamboanga
- ▶ 30 medical doctors, nurses and Red Cross volunteers providing a front-line response during the bombings attended a burn management seminar
- ▶ 157 patients (including 155 weapon-wounded) given surgical and medical care with ICRC support, 20 of whom required multiple surgical operations
- ▶ 47 wounded people provided with blood from National Society blood banks
- ▶ 97 IDPs given medical treatment
- ▶ 20 amputees (1 woman) who had lost limbs as result of the conflict or landmines provided with prostheses
- ▶ 23 crutches and 1 wheelchair delivered

## AUTHORITIES

The technical working group established by the House Justice Committee to review a bill penalizing violations of IHL received support and advice from the ICRC. Close cooperation was maintained with the

national IHL committee chaired by the Philippine National Red Cross.

The government signed Additional Protocol III, and the instrument of ratification for the Hague Convention on Cultural Property and its First Protocol, which had been signed by the Executive, was transmitted to the Senate for approval.

In order to raise awareness of IHL-related issues and its concerns, the ICRC participated in the first regional conference on building networks to strengthen human rights cooperation among member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, held in Manila in April and organized by the Philippine Commission on Human Rights. It also participated in the international counter-“terrorism” experts’ conference in Cebu City.

## ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Dialogue with the armed forces and insurgent groups regarding their obligations under IHL continued. Dissemination sessions on IHL and the Fundamental Principles were organized for the armed forces and police units, as well as for members of the MILF and MNLF.

Owing to the increasingly tense environment, the programme of field dissemination for army battalions in central and southern Luzon was resumed to complement ongoing National Society efforts. Dialogue on humanitarian issues was reinforced with regional military commands, officers responsible for civil-military operations and junior field commanders.

The armed forces received technical support in carrying out a full review of IHL instruction, with a view to standardizing and improving customized training methods and materials at all levels.

- ▶ 3,770 members of the armed forces, including senior officers, attended IHL workshops
- ▶ 2 air force officers participated in an ICRC-organized IHL workshop abroad
- ▶ 64 military observers, about to be deployed with UN peacekeeping forces, attended IHL presentations
- ▶ 10 officers from the international monitoring team supervising the ceasefire agreement between the government and MILF briefed on the role of the ICRC
- ▶ 25 police instructors at headquarters attended train-the-trainer courses

- 650 police officers attended field or headquarters dissemination sessions

Regular contact was maintained with MILF and MNLF representatives. Contacts were further developed with persons close to the NPA, who indicated a greater willingness to relay to the NPA the ICRC's interest in pursuing dialogue on humanitarian issues.

- 954 MNLF and 81 MILF members and 31 young people and 37 female members selected by the MILF Central Committee attended field presentations on IHL and the Movement

## CIVIL SOCIETY

Extensive communication in the field continued, aimed at raising awareness of the ICRC's mandate and activities and the basic protection afforded to people under IHL.

- 4,000 representatives of local communities, 2,000 representatives of provincial and local government and NGOs, 3,342 village leaders and 400 students attended dissemination sessions
- 2 senior Filipino journalists invited to speak at an IHL event organized for the Asian Media Summit (see *Kuala Lumpur*)
- a study to assess the level of integration of IHL in law curricula launched, and the inaugural edition of the *Asia-Pacific Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law* published by the Institute of International Legal Studies of the University of the Philippines Law Centre, with ICRC support
- law students and lecturers sponsored to attend national and international IHL events and competitions
- copies of the ICRC's study on customary international humanitarian law distributed to higher-education establishments
- students, including local government executives and administrators, taking part in the Masters in Public Management programme of the Development Academy of the Philippines attended ICRC lectures

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Cooperation with the Philippine National Red Cross helped the ICRC to enhance its proximity to victims of violence (see *Civilians*). The ICRC supported National Society initiatives to raise public awareness of IHL and the Movement.

The National Society received ICRC support in assisting the victims of the landslide in southern Leyte and the typhoons in Albay and Mindoro. Immediately after the events, the ICRC deployed a team to assist the National Society in coordinating with the International Federation and to support forensic teams. National Society representatives, government officials and humanitarian organizations attended an ICRC-organized national symposium aimed at boosting capacities in tracing and identification of disaster victims.

Staff of Red Cross chapters in Luzon and Mindanao attended training sessions in the use of emergency equipment so as to be able to respond to conflict-related displacements. The training focused on assessment of the water situation during emergencies and in temporary evacuation centres. This preparation facilitated the deployment of ICRC water equipment following typhoon-related destruction and displacement in southern Luzon. The National Society distributed 4,000 tarpaulins provided by the ICRC to victims of Typhoon Durian.

The family-visits programme, implemented jointly with the Philippine National Red Cross, continued to help family members maintain contact with their detained relatives (see *People deprived of their freedom*). The National Society also helped restore family links for the estimated 30,000 Filipino workers in Lebanon during the conflict there, with support from the ICRC. It also participated in the regional family-links conference in December (see *Bangkok*).

Some 100 volunteer IHL disseminators attended five refresher courses organized by the National Society, with ICRC support.