

COLOMBIA



ICRC delegation ICRC sub-delegation ICRC office/presence ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation project

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2016

- ▶ As a neutral intermediary, the ICRC facilitated: the handover of 27 people held by armed groups; the transfer of demobilized child soldiers to reception centres; and the recovery of the remains of 17 people killed in the fighting.
- ▶ Families of missing persons coped with their situation with the help of psychosocial care and financial assistance provided by the ICRC and local partners.
- ▶ Thousands of IDPs and other vulnerable people in both urban and rural areas worked to recover their food-production capacities and livelihoods, with the help of ICRC-provided supplies and equipment and cash assistance.
- ▶ IDPs and residents in over 30 communities reduced their exposure to health hazards and risks posed by mines, partly through ICRC upgrades to their water, sanitation and shelter facilities, and promotion of good hygiene practices.
- ▶ With ICRC advice, the authorities revised their policies on solitary confinement, the use of force and other disciplinary measures; they were also better placed to apply laws protecting minors formerly associated with armed groups.
- ▶ Sick and weapon-wounded people, disabled persons and victims of sexual violence received appropriate care, with ICRC support. Weapon bearers were reminded of the necessity of facilitating the safe delivery of health care.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	8,705
Assistance	13,855
Prevention	3,064
Cooperation with National Societies	1,166
General	522
Total	27,313
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	<i>1,667</i>

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	88%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	66
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	301

In Colombia since 1969, the ICRC strives to protect and assist victims of armed conflicts and other 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. It supports efforts to address the needs of families of missing persons, provides relief to violence-affected IDPs and residents, and helps ensure their access to health care. It runs a comprehensive mine-action programme. It works closely with the Colombian Red Cross and other Movement components active in Colombia.

YEARLY RESULT

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action	HIGH
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PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	52
RCMs distributed	31
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)	178
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
ICRC visits	
Detainees visited	63,892
Detainees visited and monitored individually	253
Number of visits carried out	122
Number of places of detention visited	32
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	17
RCMs distributed	2

ASSISTANCE	2016 Targets (up to)	Achieved	
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)			
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)			
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	5,000	2,805
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	5,000	4,338
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	10,600	14,291
Cash	Beneficiaries		170,718
Services and training	Beneficiaries		139,227
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)			
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	16,500	17,406
Health			
Health centres supported	Structures		3
WOUNDED AND SICK			
Hospitals			
Hospitals supported	Structures		14
Water and habitat			
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds		84
Physical rehabilitation			
Projects supported	Projects	8	11
Patients receiving services	Patients		11,922

CONTEXT

In October 2016, the Colombian public voted not to ratify the peace agreement between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army (FARC-EP). The parties revised their peace agreement; after its approval by the Colombian Congress, it was implemented in December 2016. The parties continued to implement an agreement on clarifying the fate of missing people, and pursued their commitment to demobilize child soldiers. Minors formerly associated with armed groups were transferred to reception centres run by other humanitarian organizations or the State.

The peace agreement, accompanied by a sustained ceasefire, resulted in a decrease in the violence related to the armed conflict. However, situations of violence involving other armed groups continued, especially in urban centres such as Buenaventura and Medellín. The government authorized the use of military force to combat some of these groups. Despite ongoing hostilities, negotiations between the government and the National Liberation Army continued.

People continued to suffer the consequences of the armed conflicts and other violence: among others, disappearance, displacement, sexual violence and restricted access to basic services.

The Colombian Constitutional Court issued a ruling declaring the situation in the country’s penitentiary system as unconstitutional, particularly with regard to overcrowding.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC maintained its operational presence in rural and urban areas affected by conflict and other violence. It continued its confidential dialogue with parties to the conflicts and other weapon bearers and, where necessary, reminded them of their obligations under IHL or other applicable laws through oral and written representations based on documented allegations of abuses. These activities, along with acceptance of the organization’s role as a neutral intermediary, enabled it to: receive information on the fate of missing persons; recover human remains for identification and burial; facilitate the handover of people, especially children, held by armed groups; and promote the safe delivery of health-care services in violence-affected communities.

To foster long-term compliance with the applicable norms, the ICRC continued supporting the armed and security forces’ efforts to incorporate IHL and other pertinent norms in their training and doctrine. With ICRC support, government officials and relevant stakeholders discussed, at various events, IHL issues specific to Colombia’s situation, such as non-international armed conflicts and victims’ rights. Colombia worked towards ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty.

The ICRC shared its recommendations on a draft law establishing a national mechanism for clarifying the fate of missing persons. It reinforced its response to missing persons’ families; it published a report on their needs, and urged the authorities to take the necessary measures to address them. At ICRC-organized workshops, the authorities tackled the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach – combining forensic identification, and economic, legal and psychosocial support – to meeting these families’ needs. With the Colombian Red Cross, the ICRC shared with the families concerned ways to cope with their economic, legal and psychological needs; with local partners, it provided psychosocial care for them.

The ICRC focused its assistance activities towards helping State services strengthen their ability to respond to the needs of IDPs and other vulnerable people. Where budgetary constraints or the volume of victims’ claims hampered State services, the ICRC, by itself or with the National Society, helped fill gaps in State coverage. Distributions of cash and food, and livelihood-support initiatives, helped vulnerable families cover their immediate needs or work towards self-sufficiency. Upgrades to water and sanitation facilities helped IDPs and residents – including people in areas contaminated with mines or explosive remnants of war (ERW) – reduce the risk to their safety.

With ICRC help, sick and weapon-wounded people, disabled persons and victims of sexual violence received suitable medical attention. Health personnel learnt more about their rights and duties, and received markers bearing protective emblems, which helped them deliver their services safely.

The ICRC continued to visit detainees according to its standard procedures; afterwards, it confidentially shared its findings with the authorities. Detainees restored contact with their families through the Movement’s family-links services. The ICRC concluded its material assistance to the detaining authorities in 2016, and began shifting towards a more advisory role in detention-related activities. It focused on advising central authorities on addressing system-wide detention-related issues at policy level, following the Colombian Constitutional Court’s ruling (see *Context*). With ICRC technical advice, the authorities continued revising their policies on solitary confinement, the use of force and other disciplinary measures, and worked to address health emergencies in prisons. Penitentiary officials from 13 countries participated in the first regional conference on prison management in Latin America.

The ICRC broadened public awareness of IHL and humanitarian issues in Colombia through its report *Humanitarian Challenges 2016* and other communication materials picked up by local media outlets.

Regular cooperation helped the National Society and the ICRC to improve their capacities to address humanitarian needs. With ICRC support, the National Society integrated the Safer Access Framework into its volunteers’ training.

CIVILIANS

Parties to the conflicts and the ICRC held confidential dialogue on: the protection of civilians; the release of minors associated with armed groups; missing persons; and sexual violence. Weapon bearers were reminded of their obligations under IHL or other applicable laws, through oral or written representations made by the ICRC based on documented allegations of abuses, including attacks on people seeking or delivering health-care services. The ICRC discussed with the parties the consequences of sexual violence and the means of preventing it; and provided vulnerable people with brochures outlining ways of reducing the risks of sexual violence.

Parties affirmed their understanding of and acceptance for the ICRC’s role as a neutral intermediary, particularly in connection with the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP, and their humanitarian demining projects. The ICRC also participated in the technical committee in charge of implementing the agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP on missing persons.

Minors held by armed groups rejoin their families

As a neutral intermediary, the ICRC facilitated the return of 27 people held by armed groups – including 15 minors – to their families, with the agreement of all parties concerned. It also assisted in the transfer of 13 minors formerly associated with the FARC-EP to reception centres run by the State or other humanitarian organizations; where appropriate, the ICRC helped restore contact between them and their families.

Twenty other demobilized minors spent time with their families during ICRC-organized visits. Family members dispersed by armed conflict or detention restored contact through the Movement's family-links services. With ICRC assistance, over 755 people facing threats linked to the conflicts or other violence reached safer places, and some 75 families covered funeral expenses for relatives killed in the fighting.

Missing persons' families receive psychosocial support

As per the agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP on missing persons, the ICRC, acting as a neutral intermediary, recovered the remains of ten people and turned them over to the authorities. Five were identified, and four returned to their families, who received psychosocial support throughout the process. The remains of seven other people were handed over by an armed group and community members to the ICRC, which turned them over to the authorities.

Over 160 relatives of missing persons received psychosocial care from health-care personnel or ICRC-trained local partners. At support-group sessions facilitated by the Colombian Red Cross and the ICRC, 72 members of missing persons' families learnt how to manage their economic, legal and psychological needs. With the ICRC's financial assistance, 22 families gave their relatives' remains a dignified burial. Another 87 families (121 people) received cash for rebuilding their livelihoods.

The ICRC made recommendations, to the parties concerned, for a draft law establishing a national mechanism for clarifying the fate of missing persons. It also released its assessment of the needs of missing persons' families in a public report; findings were used to urge or help the authorities to improve measures assisting these families. At ICRC-facilitated workshops, more than 280 government officials, prosecutors, investigators, forensic experts and National Society volunteers were reminded of the rights of missing persons' families, and urged to address these families' needs through an approach combining forensic identification with economic, legal and psychosocial support.

ICRC training helped emergency responders – including civil defence personnel, firefighters and National Society volunteers – strengthened their ability to manage human remains during disasters. Cemetery workers learnt ways to improve the management of unidentified or unclaimed human remains; 461 vaults were constructed in the central cemetery of Buenaventura. At ICRC-organized seminars, forensic experts discussed the standardization of forensic procedures. The ICRC collected biological samples from several missing persons' families, and monitored their processing by forensic services.

Newly arrived IDPs in urban centres meet their immediate needs with cash assistance

The State's victim assistance unit and other institutions drew on ICRC support to help IDPs and other vulnerable people. They received cash and technical or material support for service delivery,

benefitting over 154,000 and 138,000 people, respectively. For example, they used ICRC-donated computers and office equipment to file victims' statements and expedite administrative processes, thereby delivering assistance to beneficiaries more quickly.

Where budgetary constraints or the sheer volume of victims' claims hampered State services, the ICRC, by itself or with the National Society, helped fill gaps in State coverage. Distributions of food to over 2,800 IDPs and other conflict-affected people (700 households), and household essentials for over 4,300 people (1,000 households), helped them meet their immediate needs. Some 3,000 IDPs (760 households) who had recently arrived in urban centres also received cash assistance.

Where circumstances allowed, the ICRC helped IDPs work towards self-sufficiency: over 1,400 breadwinners (supporting over 5,900 people) received cash for vocational training or as partial coverage of their salaries; 246 households (984 people) earned income from small businesses they had established with ICRC-provided materials. Over 3,260 households (10,147 people) in rural areas used ICRC-provided agricultural inputs to increase or diversify their harvests, allowing them to consume or sell more food. Beneficiaries included 372 agricultural students who developed techniques for improving their community's food production.

Some 900 IDPs and around 16,500 residents from Buenaventura and 32 rural areas decreased their exposure to health hazards through ICRC hygiene-promotion sessions and upgrades to their water, sanitation and shelter facilities. Through similar projects, 2,797 people also reduced their exposure to mines or ERW; over 1,770 children were encouraged to attend class following improvements to their school facilities. At ICRC-organized workshops, nearly 14,000 community members and local authorities learnt more about victims' rights and safe practices in weapon-contaminated areas.

Victims of sexual violence receive suitable care

Around 170 victims of sexual violence coped with their situation, with ICRC-provided medical and psychological care. At ICRC-facilitated workshops, local service providers and National Society volunteers trained to provide psychological first aid. The ICRC donated medical supplies to, or repaired the facilities of, three health centres to help them cope with influxes of patients.

To facilitate people's safe access to health care in conflict-affected areas, the ICRC monitored attacks against people delivering or seeking health care and made representations to the parties concerned. About 6,000 health personnel received markers bearing protective emblems, including some for use on facilities and vehicles. With ICRC support, National Society volunteers, community members and health personnel learnt more about their rights and duties, and ways to promote respect for health-care services; three universities incorporated these topics in their curricula.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

The ICRC visited detainees in accordance with its standard procedures, and confidentially shared with the authorities feedback to help them ensure that detainees' treatment and living conditions conformed to internationally recognized standards.

Authorities work towards refining criminal policies and disciplinary measures

The ICRC concluded its material support to the detaining authorities in 2016; it began shifting towards a more advisory role in its

detention-related activities. It focused on advising central authorities on addressing system-wide issues, such as: overcrowding, and updating criminal policies and reinforcing respect for judicial guarantees. The ICRC's advisory role was facilitated by its participation in the committee charged with following up the Constitutional Court's ruling (see *Context*).

Senior penitentiary officials from 13 Latin American countries participated in the first regional conference on prison management, organized by the ICRC and Colombian penitentiary authorities. The participants discussed such matters as the challenges posed by overcrowding, the importance of training prison staff and the need for a standardized model for prison management. Colombian authorities were urged to adopt an ICRC-designed model for handling health emergencies in prisons and ensuring vulnerable detainees' timely access to health care. They drew on ICRC technical advice to ensure that the infrastructure of newly constructed prisons, especially for women and minors, complied with the minimum internationally recognized standards. Over 7,600 detainees had improved living conditions after ICRC-supported upgrades to their water, sanitation and dining facilities.

Judiciary and penitentiary authorities drew on ICRC expertise to revise their policies on solitary confinement, the use of force and other disciplinary measures; some 240 penitentiary officers underwent training in the proper use of force. A task force of 31 judges responsible for carrying out sentences visited selected detention centres with the ICRC; the aim was to assess detainees' living conditions, with a view to establishing clearer criteria for alternative sentences, such as house arrest and conditional release.

With ICRC support, authorities in the juvenile penal system developed their ability to apply laws protecting minors formerly associated with armed groups. Detained minors, including those formerly associated with armed groups, contacted their relatives through RCMs; 30 adolescents spent time with their families during ICRC-organized visits.

WOUNDED AND SICK

Through ICRC assistance, some 1,400 wounded and sick people obtained adequate care. One-off donations of medical supplies were made to 22 hospitals and first-aid posts, to help them cope with influxes of patients.

Over 11,900 disabled people received services or assistive devices, or both, at six ICRC-supported physical rehabilitation centres. Among them, 341 people – including 73 detainees, some injured by mines or ERW prior to detention – covered their transportation, accommodation and treatment expenses, with ICRC assistance. Drawing on ICRC technical advice, the national health authorities and two training institutes enhanced the implementation of good practices in providing prosthetic and orthotic services, and over 84 prosthetic-orthotic technicians honed their skills at specialized courses. Two wheelchair-manufacturing facilities, and the physical rehabilitation section of one hospital, maintained the quality of their services with spare parts and supplies from the ICRC.

Through training conducted by the ICRC, by itself or with the National Society, some 1,400 people from areas contaminated with mines or ERW strengthened their first-aid skills; over 500 medical personnel and students learnt more about weapon-wound management.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Dialogue with the authorities and with weapon bearers emphasized the necessity of ensuring the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid, particularly health services, to communities affected by conflict and other violence. Such contact facilitated the ICRC's activities and fostered acceptance for the ICRC's role as a neutral intermediary.

The ICRC maintained its efforts to strengthen dialogue with armed groups in violence-affected urban areas, such as Buenaventura and Medellín.

The Colombian military incorporates IHL in its doctrine

The armed forces continued their cooperation with the ICRC in integrating IHL and international human rights law into their doctrine, with a view to completing the process by 2020. With ICRC technical support, the armed forces and the national police continued integrating these bodies of law into their respective educational and training curricula. Drawing on ICRC technical input, the armed forces assessed their incorporation of IHL in their doctrine and refined their protocols for preventing sexual violence, during self-evaluation exercises and round-tables (see *Civilians*).

With ICRC support, 1,700 members of the armed and security forces attended training in IHL and international standards for the use of force, particularly for their joint law enforcement operations. They incorporated learnings from such training in their own exercises, with a view to instructing their staff in the same topics. Senior police officers discussed methods for handling violent social protests, and other topics, at a regional colloquium in Ecuador (see *Lima*).

Policy-makers discuss how to uphold conflict victims' rights

At two public panels organized by academic institutions and the ICRC, some 350 government officials and other stakeholders discussed IHL issues pertinent to Colombia's situation: for instance, the participation of civilians in hostilities and the provision on non-international armed conflicts in the updated Commentary on the First Geneva Convention. Public servants tested their knowledge of IHL in the fifth Augusto Ramírez Ocampo Course on IHL, organized jointly by the national IHL committee and the ICRC. At the first ICRC-organized workshop on overcoming challenges in the application of IHL in Colombia, key legal stakeholders discussed policy-making in connection with IHL and victims' rights, and measures for attending to the needs of missing people's families (see *Civilians*).

Colombia passed a law officially recognizing the Arms Trade Treaty as binding; the foreign affairs ministry prepared to deposit instruments of ratification, the final step in the ratification process.

The media broaden public awareness of the needs of victims of conflict and other violence

ICRC public communication efforts focused on broadening awareness of humanitarian issues related to: the plight of missing people and their families; the needs of detainees; urban violence; and the long-term impact of weapon contamination. These efforts included: regularly posting multimedia material on the ICRC's website and on social media platforms; and publishing the delegation's report on IHL and humanitarian issues, *Humanitarian Challenges 2016*, which was made available to decision-makers at local and national levels. Media organizations relayed the report's key messages to the wider public; partner television stations – in

Medellín, for instance – adapted the report into a series of news pieces highlighting victims’ stories.

Sustained contact with journalists and opinion-makers contributed to the media focus on the aforementioned points. At two courses, 80 journalists learnt about the protection afforded to them by IHL; senior editors were encouraged to report accurately on IHL and humanitarian issues.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Colombian Red Cross continued responding to the needs of people affected by conflict and other violence in the country (see *Civilians*); it bolstered its capacity to do so with ICRC technical and financial support. For instance, the National Society incorporated the Safer Access Framework in its training programme; ICRC-trained National Society instructors briefed volunteers and staff from 16 branches, thereby enhancing their ability to operate safely in violence-affected areas. With ICRC help, the National Society also strengthened its financial management and upgraded the infrastructure of its branches.

The National Society and the ICRC further strengthened their partnership by developing joint strategies for activities such as addressing the issue of missing persons and training security forces in human rights law and the use of force (see *Actors of influence*). Regular meetings reinforced coordination among Movement partners and facilitated the exchange of security-related information. The National Society also took part in the coordinated Movement response to the earthquake in Ecuador in April 2016 (see *Lima*).

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
RCMs and other means of family contact			UAMs/SC		
RCMs collected		52	46		
RCMs distributed		31	12		
Reunifications, transfers and repatriations					
People transferred or repatriated		27			
Human remains transferred or repatriated		17			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		649	81	61	121
Tracing cases closed positively (subject located or fate established)		178			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		936	86	72	164
	<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	2			
Documents					
Official documents relayed between family members across borders/front lines		1			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits			Women	Minors	
Detainees visited		63,892	5,304	1,224	
			Women	Girls	Boys
Detainees visited and monitored individually		253	19	5	48
Detainees newly registered		114	9	5	41
Number of visits carried out		122			
Number of places of detention visited		32			
RCMs and other means of family contact					
RCMs collected		17			
RCMs distributed		2			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		41			

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)				
Food commodities	Beneficiaries	2,805	724	1,349
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	217	76	76
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	4,338	1,236	1,923
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	369	125	137
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	14,291	3,979	6,854
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	3,937	1,383	1,604
Cash	Beneficiaries	170,718	55,124	69,286
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	163,596	52,746	66,478
Services and training	Beneficiaries	139,727	49,836	47,928
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	138,227	49,311	47,403
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	17,406	5,396	6,422
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	916	284	321
Health				
Health centres supported	Structures	3		
Average catchment population		2,433		
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection programme)				
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	78	78	
Cash	Beneficiaries	92	83	7
Water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	7,681	1,843	
WOUNDED AND SICK				
Hospitals				
Hospitals supported	Structures	14		
Patients whose hospital treatment has been paid for by the ICRC		1,495	550	232
First aid				
First-aid posts supported	Structures	8		
Water and habitat				
Water and habitat activities	Number of beds	84		
Physical rehabilitation				
Projects supported	Projects	11		
Patients receiving services	Patients	11,922	4,004	4,061
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	350	92	20
Prostheses delivered	Units	644	137	38
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	75	8	
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	5,147	1,115	2,748
Orthoses delivered	Units	8,161	1,946	4,217
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	93	30	26
Patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	4,398	2,297	405
Walking aids delivered	Units	802	323	46
Wheelchairs or tricycles delivered	Units	1,245	319	452