

SRI LANKA



ICRC delegation ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

EXPENDITURE (IN KCHF)

Protection	3,644
Assistance	1,491
Prevention	827
Cooperation with National Societies	922
General	-

► **6,883**

of which: Overheads 420

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	40%
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PERSONNEL

Expatriates	21
National staff (daily workers not included)	131

KEY POINTS

In 2011, the ICRC:

- visited 17,741 detainees, monitoring 2,377 individually, in 64 places of detention and facilitating, with the National Society, family visits for 5,057 inmates, including those in rehabilitation centres
- increased its financial and technical support to the National Society's ongoing structural reform and island-wide capacity-building efforts, in cooperation with the International Federation and partner National Societies
- with the National Society, launched an initiative providing cash grants and vocational training to vulnerable households, including those headed by women and disabled persons
- boosted the authorities' efforts to develop a plan of action on human remains management by supporting a national workshop on the subject
- further expanded its support to Sri Lanka's physically disabled, including by providing technical and material support to the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation in the north and to the Navajeevana centre in the south
- briefed some 3,360 troops departing on UN peacekeeping operations on IHL rules relevant to their functions, on the humanitarian situation in their countries of deployment and on the role of the ICRC there

The ICRC has worked in Sri Lanka since 1989. Operations focus on: protecting and assisting civilians affected by the past armed conflict; visiting detainees and enabling family members to remain in touch; providing water supply and economic security for IDPs, returnees and resident communities; improving access to physical rehabilitation facilities; and supporting military training in IHL.

CONTEXT

In August 2011, the state of emergency that had been in place, intermittently, for 28 years was lifted as Sri Lanka continued its recovery from the former armed conflict that ended in May 2009.

Most of the 280,000 civilians displaced at the end of the conflict and accommodated in camps had returned to their areas of origin, some as part of a government-led process that began in 2009. Thousands remained unaccounted for, leaving relatives without definitive information about their fate. While travel restrictions were lifted in July, independent humanitarian access to most former conflict areas remained strictly regulated.

While the lifting of the state of emergency meant that the Emergency Regulations no longer applied, people allegedly affiliated with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continued to be detained in prisons and detention centres under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Others were held in so-called rehabilitation centres, though many were released from these centres during 2011.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

Despite very restricted space for independent humanitarian action, the ICRC continued to contribute to addressing the consequences of the former armed conflict, operating whenever possible in partnership with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society.

ICRC delegates visited detainees, including those arrested and held in relation to the former armed conflict, with a focus on those held under the Emergency Regulations or suspected of affiliation with the LTTE. They checked on inmates' treatment and living conditions and reported their findings and recommendations confidentially to the detaining authorities. With the National Society, the ICRC facilitated a number of family visits to detained relatives. To assist the authorities in improving detention conditions, particularly in relation to overcrowding, the ICRC organized environmental engineering assessments of four prisons, identifying areas for improvement and providing realistic proposals for remedial action. Subsequently, rehabilitation work began and the ICRC discussed with the authorities administrative factors contributing to overcrowding, as well as possible solutions, such as respect for judicial guarantees.

Meanwhile, the ICRC supported a Health Ministry workshop aimed at developing a national plan of action to facilitate the identification of human remains through proper management.

Following a government order issued in late 2010 to close the ICRC's remaining sub-delegations in the north and curtail planned assistance activities, several proposed programmes to

Main figures and indicators		PROTECTION		Total	
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Red Cross messages (RCMs)					
RCMs collected				248	UAMs/SCs*
RCMs distributed				325	
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons					
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered			Women	1,382	Minors
People located (tracing cases closed positively)				136	
Tracing cases still being handled at 31 December 2011 (people)				15,780	1,494
UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers					
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at 31 December 2011			Girls	46	Demobilized children
Documents					
People to whom travel documents were issued				19	
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
ICRC visits					
Detainees visited			Women	17,741	Minors
Detainees visited and monitored individually				2,377	3
Detainees newly registered				159	1
Number of visits carried out				135	
Number of places of detention visited				64	
Restoring family links					
RCMs collected				397	
RCMs distributed				293	
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative				427	
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support				5,057	
People to whom a detention attestation was issued				3,263	

* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

Main figures and indicators		ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)						
Economic security, water and habitat						
Essential household items	Beneficiaries			14,000	50%	20%
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries			19,671	40%	20%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	Beneficiaries		19,240		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries			3,200	34%	34%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	Beneficiaries		3,200		
Health						
Health centres supported	Structures			1		
Average catchment population				9,392		
Consultations	Patients			9,943		
	<i>of which curative</i>	Patients			2,736	5,780
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)						
Economic security, water and habitat						
Essential household items	Beneficiaries			12,802		
Agricultural, veterinary and other micro-economic initiatives	Beneficiaries			11,353		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries			4,000		
WOUNDED AND SICK						
Physical rehabilitation						
Centres supported	Structures			1		
Patients receiving services	Patients			1,331	369	79
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients			171	45	3
Prostheses delivered	Units			334	85	8
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	Units		113		
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients			92	33	18
Orthoses delivered	Units			193	62	34
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	Units		2		
Crutches delivered	Units			161		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units			12		

assist resettling or returning populations did not take place. Cancelled programmes included the provision of seed and tools to farmers to boost crop production; the provision of tackle to fishermen to help them resume livelihood activities; cash grants or vocational training to vulnerable families to invest in improving their future; and the rehabilitation and/or extension of municipal water systems.

To help ensure vulnerable communities could nonetheless meet their own needs, the ICRC donated tractors and agricultural tool kits purchased for its aforementioned livelihood-support activities mainly to the Sri Lankan Red Cross to aid its emergency response for victims of January's floods. The organization also financed part of the National Society's appeal for the provision of essential household items for flood victims and enhanced its capacity

to provide clean water to affected communities. Furthermore, the National Society/ICRC launched a pilot initiative in October whereby vulnerable households in the north received cash grants and business management training. An ICRC-supported National Society mobile health clinic also continued providing consultations to patients in Jaffna, where hospitals were not yet fully functioning. By providing such financial, material and technical support, the ICRC aimed to strengthen the Sri Lankan Red Cross's capacity to work independently, particularly when responding to emergencies. At an institutional level, such support saw the branches in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu restored to full working order, and a training facility was established for national and northern branches in Annuradhapura.

Meanwhile, efforts to enable people with conflict-related disabilities to live in dignity continued, with the ICRC providing technical and material support to the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation (JJCDR) in the north and to the Navajeevana physical rehabilitation centre in the south. Severely disabled patients accessed services at Vavuniya General Hospital thanks to an ICRC-supported National Society ambulance service.

While IHL promotion continued amongst influential members of society, the pace of activities targeting government institutions remained slow. Similarly, support to the armed forces in teaching troops about IHL was adversely affected by the ICRC's limited access to regions they were predominantly deployed in. However, some presentations did take place, dialogue with senior officers resulted in a concrete plan for the direction of future ICRC support, and at the request of the Sri Lankan Army (SLA), the ICRC conducted predeployment briefing sessions for troops involved in UN peacekeeping missions.

CIVILIANS

Former IDPs who had recently returned to their places of residence or resettled elsewhere found damaged or neglected infrastructure, such as water supply systems, and faced the daunting task of restarting livelihood activities. However, following a government order issued in 2010 to close the ICRC's offices in the north and to cease assistance activities, plans to implement livelihood activities were cancelled (see *ICRC action and results*). Government-imposed restrictions on ICRC access to resettlement areas also prevented it from carrying out planned water supply projects and from systematically monitoring civilian welfare.

Nevertheless, the Sri Lankan Red Cross and the ICRC reinforced cooperation, wherever possible, in order to meet the needs of vulnerable civilians. Following flooding in January, three ICRC trucks and drivers, loaned to the National Society for a month, kept staff at flood-affected branches mobile and were able to respond to civilians' needs. Farmers in affected areas could more easily restart livelihood activities, and thus food production for the wider community, following an ICRC donation of some two-wheel tractors and agricultural tool kits to farmers' organizations, mainly via the National Society. These items were originally intended for the aforementioned, defunct livelihood activities and benefited 19,164 people (4,291 families). Some 14,000 people (3,500 households) received essential household items and some 3,200 people living in flood-affected communities were better protected against water-borne diseases following the cleaning of wells, carried out by 105 National Society volunteers who had previously undergone on-the-job training in water pumping, well disinfection, and flood

mapping. Additional material and technical support, including in warehouse management, the servicing/repair of water pumps, contingency planning and risk assessment, bolstered the National Society's disaster management capacity.

Later in the year, the launch of a pilot National Society/ICRC project meant that 23 vulnerable conflict-affected households in Vavuniya, including 7 headed by disabled individuals and 16 by women (benefiting 76 people in total), were better equipped to boost their income by up to 50% through one-off cash grants and/or business management training. The project also aimed to enhance the National Society's experience and capacity to run such projects, with the ultimate aim of extending them to branches countrywide. Its launch in October came later than anticipated due to administrative delays, including in staff recruitment, meaning that fewer households benefited from the project in 2011 than initially planned.

While health services in northern regions continued to lack resources, some 9,943 patients in areas of the Jaffna peninsula where hospitals had not yet resumed services accessed care thanks to 161 visits by a mobile health clinic run by the National Society with ICRC support.

Families seek information on missing relatives

Thousands of people had lost touch with relatives during the former conflict and in its immediate aftermath, and many such cases reported to the ICRC remained unresolved. The ICRC discussed the plight of separated family members with the Defence Ministry during bilateral meetings and continued to monitor the implementation of laws and creation of entities that could have an impact for missing persons and their families. For example, parliament passed a law enabling relatives of those missing in relation to the former conflict to register their family member's death and obtain a death certificate, thus enabling them to settle land ownership issues and/or get remarried.

While people, including migrants, continued to request the ICRC's help in searching for family members unaccounted for, restrictions on ICRC access to people in the affected areas limited its ability to play a direct role in restoring family links. However, such families, along with those dispersed by the floods (see *Context*), were able to register missing relatives with National Society/ICRC-trained volunteers at five branches in the north and east, who used a tracing database updated with ICRC technical support. With the help of National Society volunteers, people with detained family members, including those held in rehabilitation camps, visited their relatives (see *People deprived of their freedom*), thus saving their sometimes meagre resources for other essentials, such as health care or education. The National Society was better able to respond to needs in the field of restoring family links, having drawn on ICRC expertise to draft contingency plans.

With a view to formulating a national human remains management strategy, including identification, and so help clarify the fate of missing persons, the authorities drew on ICRC technical advice during a workshop organized by the Health Ministry. Subsequently, a steering group was formed tasked with formulating a national plan of action, which included attention to necessary changes to the law. A forensic practitioner honed their skills in managing and identifying human remains at a training course in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Thousands of people continued to be held in relation to the former armed conflict at temporary and permanent places of detention around the country, and arrests continued. When the state of emergency was lifted, inmates held in connection with the former armed conflict were detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The ICRC monitored the application of such detention-related laws and abandoned its fruitless efforts to obtain access to people held in rehabilitation centres.

Some 17,700 detainees, including those held in temporary places of detention and special police units, received visits from the ICRC, according to its standard procedures, with 2,377 monitored individually. Following all visits, ICRC delegates made confidential reports to the relevant detaining authorities containing their findings and any recommendations with regard to detainees' treatment, living conditions and judicial guarantees. Such dialogue led to detainees at one jail being granted access to an outdoor area for between one and three hours a day.

Detainees maintained contact with their relatives through RCMs and/or ICRC-funded visits (see *Civilians*). After former LTTE fighters who had surrendered were released from rehabilitation centres in September 2011, demand for family visits fell, with the exception of Batticaloa Prison, where visits increased as relatives in the area learnt of the programme from the National Society. In some cases, families had not seen their detained relatives for several months because they could not afford the bus fare to the prison. Clothing kits and hygiene items aimed to improve the quality of life for some 12,800 detainees, and recreational items, including indoor/outdoor games and library books, helped to ease the monotony of incarceration for inmates at several prisons. Efforts made by the prison authorities to produce their own food and involve the detainees in agricultural activities were also bolstered by an ad hoc ICRC donation of 17 tractors and 100 agricultural tool kits to 15 open prisons (over 11,000 inmates). In 2011, 32 released detainees benefited from assistance to return home.

Mobility aids such as crutches, as well as prosthetic limbs, allowed disabled detainees to serve their sentences with more dignity, including 48 people held at Boossa detention centre who obtained prosthetic limbs through a cooperation agreement between local NGO Sanasuma and the ICRC, which successfully concluded at year-end when the authorities assumed responsibility for such assistance.

Authorities receive support in improving detention conditions long-term

Efforts by the prison authorities to make long-term improvements to detainees' living conditions, particularly with regard to overcrowding, were supported by environmental engineering assessments carried out by ICRC experts in four prisons. These assessments, which analysed the nature and extent of any problems, provided the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms with precise and realistic proposals for remedial action and subsequently formed the basis of discussions, including on the importance of establishing a more effective health management system between the health and prison authorities. In parallel, constructive meetings between the authorities and the ICRC, and the submission of an ICRC report on overcrowding, paved the way for the implementation of specific measures to address the problem in Sri Lanka's detention facilities.

Some 4,000 detainees were better able to avoid disease following rehabilitation work, including at Welikada Prison, where three new toilet blocks were built and a further two renovated. Prison hospital authorities were made aware of the importance of introducing medical waste incinerators and TB diagnostic tests.

WOUNDED AND SICK

Some of the people wounded as a result of the past conflict, either during the fighting or afterwards by explosive remnants of war, had had limbs amputated. As people continued to resettle, they were better able to seek treatment. Some 1,331 patients received treatment at the JJCDR, the only longstanding physical rehabilitation centre in the north. A further 1,835 patients in the north, unable to travel to the centre, were treated at home as part of the centre's outreach programme. In order to boost the quality of patient services at the centre, which produced 334 prostheses and 193 orthoses, three outreach officers and two assistants underwent additional ICRC-supported training in their fields, and one physiotherapy assistant attended a one-week course in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

As several NGOs had moved their physical rehabilitation to the north, 29 patients had their treatment paid at the Navajeavana centre, a local NGO in the south dedicated to helping disabled patients, on the basis of an agreement signed with the ICRC in March. All three programmes enjoyed ICRC administrative, material, technical and/or financial support. Meanwhile, 14 severely disabled patients accessed care at Vavuniya General Hospital in an ICRC-funded National Society ambulance.

AUTHORITIES

Following the closure of ICRC offices (see *ICRC action and results*) and the scaling-down of ICRC operations post-conflict, the organization discussed its revised role in the country and remaining humanitarian priorities with key decision-makers, including government ministers. Similarly, bilateral meetings continued with influential actors at national level, including officials of the UN, NGOs and diplomatic missions, with the objectives of raising awareness of IHL and the ICRC's mandate and work, establishing and/or consolidating relations and networks, identifying needs, obtaining advice and offering services. Such dialogue led to the launch of several activities, in coordination with the authorities, such as a workshop on human remains management (see *Civilians*).

Sri Lanka was party to several IHL treaties, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, but had not fully incorporated them into domestic law. To encourage the authorities to accelerate this process, the ICRC sponsored high-ranking government officials, including from the External Affairs and Justice Ministries and the Attorney General's Department, to attend IHL events such as: a training session co-organized by the ICRC and the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization (see *New Delhi*); the Third South Asia Regional IHL Conference, held in Male, Maldives (see *New Delhi*); and the 18th and 19th South Asia Teaching Sessions, held in Kathmandu and Bangalore respectively (see *Nepal* and *New Delhi*). ICRC publications updated officials and institutions on IHL and relevant humanitarian topics.

ARMED FORCES AND OTHER BEARERS OF WEAPONS

Some 800 officers, including from the SLA and Special Task Force, improved their understanding of their obligations under IHL and international human rights law and the Movement following ICRC briefings nationwide. Cadets did likewise at the Defence Services Command and Staff College. Following discussions with

military leadership, it was agreed such briefings would be discontinued in 2012 in favour of train-the-trainer courses. Engagement on IHL integration into military doctrine, training and operations was not possible.

To enhance police officers' understanding of international policing standards, the ICRC presented the authorities with the findings of its comprehensive assessment of police training needs. Together, they drafted a memorandum of understanding outlining future ICRC support to national efforts in this regard. It included support in developing standard operating procedures, particularly in situations of public unrest. Subsequently, officers, including some 100 tasked with teaching such subjects, boosted their knowledge at ICRC workshops/lectures.

Meanwhile, at the SLA's request, some 3,360 personnel participating in UN peacekeeping missions attended briefings at which they enhanced their knowledge of their legal obligations, the humanitarian situation in their countries of deployment and the ICRC's role there. One officer was also sponsored to attend an IHL training session in San Remo.

CIVIL SOCIETY

The media drew on National Society/ICRC briefings and press releases to produce articles or news programmes on humanitarian topics in local languages. To encourage them to use the information ethically and impart their knowledge of IHL and the Movement, particularly the ICRC's post-conflict role, provincial and national journalists attended ICRC-organized workshops. Interaction with NGO representatives and community and religious leaders, while limited due to the scaling-down of ICRC operations, helped to prioritize any residual humanitarian issues and increased their awareness of Movement action, as did ICRC publications distributed to influential society members in local languages.

Meanwhile, reference materials supported universities teaching IHL, where students were encouraged to participate in IHL essay-writing competitions. Students of the Open University of Sri Lanka and the University of Colombo put their IHL knowledge into practice at regional moot court competitions in Hong Kong, China, and Kathmandu, Nepal, respectively (see *Beijing* and *Nepal*).

The National Society's ability to promote IHL, humanitarian values and the Movement's mandate was strengthened by the appointment of a dissemination officer charged with helping identify and meet local needs. Volunteers developed their own training curricula and dissemination tools at an ICRC workshop, and one volunteer charged with promoting IHL completed a postgraduate diploma in IHL, with ICRC sponsorship.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

Amid heavy restrictions on humanitarian access, the National Society remained an invaluable operational partner for the ICRC. It responded to the needs of vulnerable communities, including by restoring family links and assisting flood-affected, displaced and returnee populations, with ICRC training and financial, technical and material support (see *Civilians*).

To enable the National Society to boost its branch disaster response teams, and thus their emergency preparedness, the ICRC supported the training of 75 volunteers (including in first aid and the Safer Access approach) and donated two trucks and disaster response kits to branches in priority areas.

The ICRC continued to support the National Society's pursuit of structural reform, increased independence and greater operational capacity. It provided technical advice, training support and equipment – including vehicles, office equipment and temporary facilities – thus enabling the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu branches, along with two new divisional units, to become fully functional, an income-generating computer centre to open in Vavuniya, and a training facility for national and northern branches to be established in Annuradhapura. It continued to coordinate activities with Movement partners.