

# 2000: a year of renewed determination and creative solutions

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## 2000: A YEAR OF RENEWED DETERMINATION AND CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

We described 1999 as an exceptional year, which indeed it was in nearly all areas of ICRC activity. But the record budget and donor response of that year were exceeded in 2000 as the situation around the globe failed to improve. The ICRC was working in more than 60 contexts, including some 25 armed conflicts marked by frequent fighting, a number of latent conflicts that could flare up at any time, and many hotbeds of tension and unrest. While some conflicts came to an end, others quickly took their place to keep the figures for war and other violent situations fairly constant worldwide. The need for humanitarian aid remained great and, with many operations lasting longer, seemed likely to increase.

More than 5 million people displaced by conflict received ICRC aid in 50 different situations. As it is often difficult to distinguish between displaced people and the resident population, which suffers just as much from the effects of conflict, the ICRC tried to meet the needs of both, paying particular attention to the plight of women in such situations.

The ICRC's budget for 2000 of over one billion Swiss francs (almost US\$ 600 million) reflected the level of violence around the world. There was clearly no improvement in Africa, where the ICRC was working in over 20 situations of violence, including 11 characterized by almost daily clashes. Some of these situations deteriorated and spilled over into neighbouring countries. Angola's war had repercussions on Namibia and Zambia, and Sierra Leone's on Guinea Conakry and Liberia. Other conflicts such as those in Sudan and Somalia seemed to be self-perpetuating. Peace agreements, in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, for example, failed to hold. New trouble spots emerged in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe.

The number of theatres of operation in Asia and the Pacific rose to 25, including 10 situations involving regular large-scale fighting. Some conflicts intensified or spread to neighbouring countries, as in South-East Asia, the Philippines, the Moluccas, West Timor, Nepal and Central Asia. Others, such as the Afghan war, became further bogged down. New areas of strife appeared in Melanesia and elsewhere, while efforts to achieve peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Myanmar and Indonesia proved more difficult than anticipated.

In Latin America, the situation in Colombia deteriorated sharply despite many meetings between the various parties to the conflict, and neighbouring countries began to feel the effects.

In Europe the ICRC conducted 16 operations, four of them relating to conflicts marked by regular clashes. Peace remained tenuous in several other contexts. The persistent conflicts in the Caucasus had an impact on adjacent countries, making efforts to resolve them even more difficult. In the Balkans, international forces are still required to protect the peace process.

In the Near and Middle East tension remained high and clashes between Israelis and Palestinians resumed at the end of September. The Iraqi situation remained in deadlock.

The ICRC maintained its response to these humanitarian challenges while at the same time pursuing the process of internal change initiated by the *Avenir* project. This process involved reflecting on new policy issues and lessons learnt, streamlining the organization's structure and developing a network of contacts in civil society, in particular economic circles, think tanks and NGOs.\*

\* NGOs: non-governmental organizations

The ICRC is the main reference point for the interpretation, development and promotion of international humanitarian law. It fulfilled this role in 2000 in many different ways. It organized two major meetings of experts, one on cultural property and the other on explosive remnants of war. Research on customary humanitarian law continued, and developments in the field of human rights were monitored closely. The ICRC also continued its follow-up to the Ottawa treaty, encouraging adherence by States not yet party to the instrument, and its work to spread knowledge of humanitarian law among specialized groups such as diplomats and academics. Through these activities the ICRC reminded States of their obligations under humanitarian law, ensured that the law was properly understood, and clarified the relationship between humanitarian law and human rights.

In the field of communication, the ongoing effort to promote humanitarian law among the armed forces and in academic circles met with some success, but much remained to be done to reach leaders, opinion-makers, militias and other non-State actors. By shifting some of the focus of dissemination to young people, the ICRC demonstrated its faith in the coming generation. This change will have an impact for years to come and reflects the ICRC's conviction that dealing with issues of violence and the rules of war is not just for the armed forces, important though it is to make them aware of those rules. The ICRC also cooperated with Harvard University in analysing the data gathered in its worldwide survey on victims of war. Finally, it improved the impact of its communication activities through an integrated production and marketing strategy.

Relations with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were a major factor in the ICRC's work during the year. There were many examples of operations which depended on National Society volunteers and structures, and through which the ICRC in turn was able to support the Societies' development and operational capacity.

The National Societies were also involved, along with governments, in the intensive consultations held in 2000 on the adoption of an additional protective emblem alongside the red cross and the red crescent. Such an emblem would allow admission to the Movement of Societies unwilling to use either the red cross or the red crescent, and would provide protection in conflicts where the emblems currently in use might be misunderstood. The ICRC played a leading role in this international effort and, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, argued for the creation of an additional emblem through the adoption of a third protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions. This was a challenge that required determination and creative solutions. It was a disappointment that the Diplomatic Conference of States needed to adopt the additional emblem, scheduled for October, had to be postponed, but the commitment of the ICRC and other components of the Movement to resolving issues of membership and protection remained unchanged.

Fortunately, the ICRC received almost all the global funding it needed to respond to these operational and other demands. There was no sign that the high level of support required in the previous year had adversely affected donor commitment; indeed, donor response was the highest ever. The ICRC's budgets, both field and headquarters, reached a record 1,088.8 million Swiss francs and the implementation rate of operations rose to 89%, another record. The pressure did, however, lead to increased borrowing to offset cash-flow problems and the low level of reserves, and the year ended with an operating deficit of 29 million Swiss francs. Nevertheless, the message was clear. Needs increased, donor response increased and the ICRC was able to maintain its high level of activity.

This experience naturally raised some serious questions, not least the sustainability of such a volume of operations. Greater emphasis on prioritization and

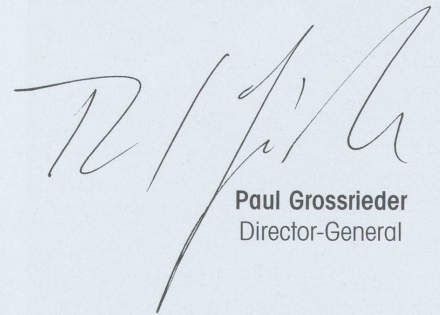
growing cooperation with other organizations helped in this respect. In June 2000 a milestone was reached in relations with UNHCR\* when the High Commissioner and the President of the ICRC met to discuss issues of practical coordination. Within the Movement, coordination between the ICRC, the International Federation and individual National Societies was further clarified and strengthened on the basis of the Seville Agreement. The concept of delegated projects became a dynamic part of the international activities conducted by National Societies in the field, complementing the work of the ICRC. All these initiatives will have to be developed if conflict persists at its present level worldwide.

The ICRC persevered with its internal reforms, which contributed directly to its ability to respond to rising demand, and continued to evaluate and review its approach to humanitarian action. The *Avenir* process, launched in 1998 and aimed at bringing about a change in internal function and management culture, was further consolidated in 2000. A clearer definition of the role of senior management and its relations with the President and the ICRC Assembly had already been achieved. During the year the creation of the Humanitarian Diplomacy Committee was another major step in enhancing the consistency of the ICRC's work. By reinforcing lateral cooperation and defining clearer institutional guidelines, it contributed to greater coherence both in Geneva and in the field. "Planning for results" and the related evaluations also had a greater impact in 2000, the first full year of implementation of the process.

In finance and administration, 2000 was essentially a period of stabilization after the major changes made pursuant to the *Avenir* project. With regard to human resources, the commitment and professionalism of ICRC staff is crucial to the organization's success, and further steps

were taken to sustain both. Transparency in staff management, a new pay structure and harmonization of the principles governing the employment of different categories of personnel, including expatriates, all improved the situation. Decentralization of recruitment and further internationalization relieved some of the staffing problems experienced in the previous year, although there was still an acute shortage of expatriate personnel. While recognizing the already high level of professionalism in the organization, senior management adopted a policy specifically designed to enhance and diversify professional skills. As part of the effort to improve accountability to donors, an improved management information system was introduced at the Geneva headquarters covering finance, human resources, logistics and fundraising.

The report that follows reviews the whole range of the ICRC's activities in 2000 and many of the issues it had to address in carrying out its work. One of the strengths of the ICRC is its flexibility and its willingness to foster internal debate on how its role should evolve. Its core activities of protection, assistance and preventive action remain constant as the ICRC adapts to the shifting nature of conflicts and to the needs of people affected by them. Through this process of change, and remaining faithful to its fundamental principles, the ICRC enters the 21st century with fresh determination to improve the ways it prevents or alleviates the suffering caused by war.



Paul Grossrieder  
Director-General

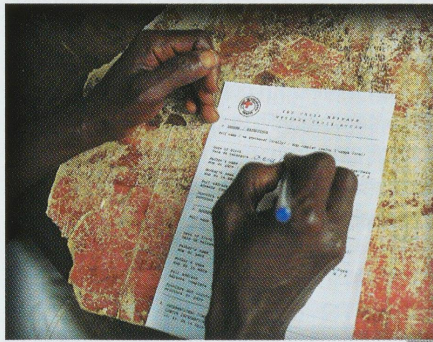
\* UNHCR: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# Working to help conflict victims



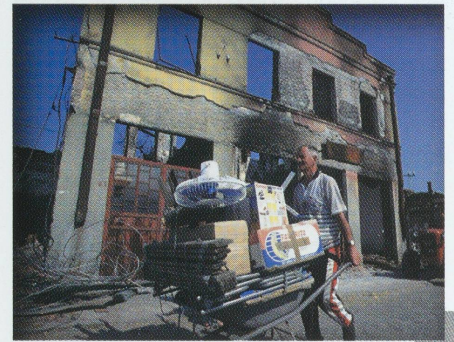
F. Pagetti/ICRC

*making certain that detainees are treated decently*

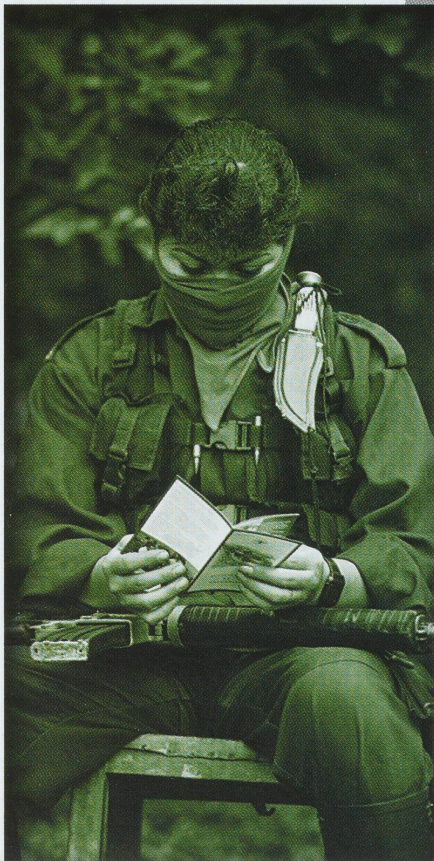


J.-P. Di Silvestro/ICRC

*restoring contact between members of families separated by war*



*ensuring protection of and respect for civilians*



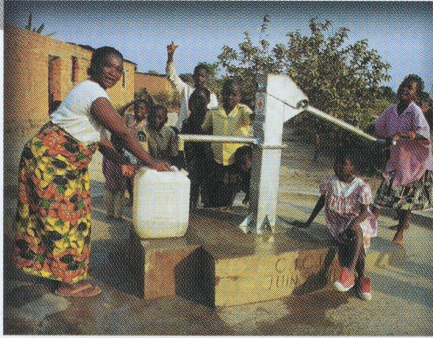
B. Heger/ICRC

*promoting humanitarian values and the law of war*

*strengthening cooperation with National Societies in the field*



*providing access  
to fresh water  
and improving hygiene*



A. Williamson/ICRC

*bringing in vital supplies  
and restoring self-sufficiency*



*delivering  
essential health-care services*



P. Spoenri/ICRC

*harmonizing  
the humanitarian response  
within the international community*



U. Meissner/ICRC

*evaluating results  
to improve performance*

