

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

ICRC Appeal

following the entry into force of the Convention on Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons

The "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects" entered into force on 2 December 1983, six months after twenty States had deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. The three Protocols annexed to the Convention also entered into force on that date; Protocol I prohibits the use of weapons with non-detectable fragments, Protocol II prohibits or limits the use of mines, booby-traps and other devices, and Protocol III prohibits or limits the use of incendiary weapons.

The *International Review of the Red Cross* published the text of the Convention and the three Protocols in its January-February 1981 issue. These treaties stipulate that not only civilians but also military objectives located within a concentration of civilians shall not be made the object of an attack by incendiary weapons and that the use of mines and booby-traps is limited so as to avoid civilian suffering as much as possible.

In modern armed conflicts an ever-increasing proportion of the civilian population suffers from the hostilities. Everyone knows the terrible suffering caused by burns; less known is the fact that more and more victims are wounded by mines or booby-traps and that they are very often left handicapped for life.

The ICRC therefore applauds the entry into force of the Convention and the Protocols. It takes this opportunity to appeal to all States to become parties to these treaties. It also appeals to all parties to armed conflicts to strictly observe their provisions, even if not formally bound by them and even if the conflict is non-international and thereby not covered by them. This is a humanitarian demand that goes beyond the strict limits of the law.