

tarian law, stressing the importance of respect for the civilian population and the Red Cross emblem. During field missions to conflict areas, members of the opposition and the general public were major targets of dissemination work. Courses and conferences were mainly given to the armed forces and the police, and efforts were also carried out through the mass media.

Another popular method of dissemination in El Salvador last year was through the medium of theatre. Specially conceived plays with audience participation explained very clearly exactly what goes on when, for example, ICRC delegates visit security detainees. The plays were by and large presented to members of the armed forces, and set in a Salvadoran context.

## **GUATEMALA**

Cooperation with the Guatemalan Red Cross was a priority in 1990 and many facets of National Society work were touched upon, the ICRC offering assistance in the following ways: training staff; setting up a dissemination department within the National Society, which would eventually take over the training of their own staff; determining the needs of civilian victims of the conflict by conducting thorough surveys with the National Society to evaluate those needs and the best ways of meeting them.

In addition, a course on the law of war was given from 8 to 12 January to 26 future officers of the general staff of the Guatemalan Armed Forces.

## **NICARAGUA**

Following the elections in March, the cease-fire agreement of April 1990 and

the subsequent end of the conflict in Nicaragua, the situation in the country no longer came under the ICRC's mandate. For this reason, the network of ICRC sub-delegations and offices, which was set up over the years to offer protection and assistance to the direct and indirect victims of the conflict, was dismantled in the course of the year and the delegation's expatriate staff was reduced from 20 to 8 by December.

### **Visits to detainees**

Roughly 1,300 security detainees who had been registered by the ICRC were still behind bars in February 1990, but by the end of April none of these people were being held for reasons related to the conflict. Upon the request of the authorities, the ICRC was actively involved during the release of those detainees in locating their families, monitoring their health and their transportation back to their places of origin, as well as providing food and clothing.

### **Tracing Agency**

On 15 November the delegation submitted a list of 997 missing persons from the 10 years of conflict to the new authorities. In addition, the delegation continued to check tracing requests still pending against information regarding returning refugees and demobilized contras obtained from lists drawn up by UNHCR and CIAV/OAS/ONUCA<sup>1</sup>.

Over 8,400 Red Cross messages were exchanged throughout the year and 925 tracing requests were resolved. The ICRC also issued 177 certificates for former detainees visited by the ICRC, as evidence that they had been held captive.

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<sup>1</sup> "Comisión Interamericana de Averiguación y Verificación," Organization of American States and ONU Centro America.