

7 September in Havana, recognized that ICRC visits to places of detention contributed to the struggle against torture and disappearances and often resulted in a general improvement in detainees' material and psychological conditions of detention.

The ICRC stepped up its contacts with the UN Centre for Human Rights, in particular in the areas of training and dissemination, as had been recommended in resolutions adopted by the UN Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly. Talks on international humanitarian law were given in seminars and workshops organized by the UN, especially in Latin America.

The ICRC also had the opportunity to exchange views on its operational activities with participants in different inter-agency meetings — both in New York and in the field — which dealt more specifically with the situation in the Horn of Africa and in southern Africa.

As in the past, the International Organizations Division participated in many international meetings (Organization of African Unity, Council of Europe, Organization of the Islamic Conference, League of Arab States, Inter-Parliamentary Union, to name but a few), each of which provided an opportunity for the ICRC to lend an attentive ear to the concerns of the international community and to express the humanitarian point of view.

## **Dissemination**

Dissemination of international humanitarian law and the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is always one of the ICRC's primary objectives. Through such activities the ICRC seeks to promote respect for international humanitarian law and prevent violations of it; to increase the

effectiveness and safety of humanitarian action; and to strengthen the Movement's identity and cohesion whilst making the specific role of each of its components (ICRC, League, National Societies) better known.

The ICRC's efforts in this respect are based on the particular responsibility for dissemination assigned to it by the Movement's Statutes. The ICRC is also helping, along with the League and the National Societies, to achieve the objectives of the Third Programme of Action which was launched for a four-year period by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross in 1986.

The Programme had four objectives: to encourage States to ratify or accede to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions; to analyse the legal and practical consequences of provisions of the Additional Protocols; to disseminate and encourage the dissemination of international humanitarian law; and to integrate the dissemination of the principles and ideals of the Movement in all its activities.

With the Third Programme of Action drawing to a close, the ICRC decided in 1990 to review its own dissemination policy in the light of its experience over the past 10 years. It was found that, of the eight target groups identified by the Movement for dissemination,<sup>5</sup> the ICRC should henceforth focus to a greater extent on five of them: the armed forces, National Societies, government authorities, academic circles and the media — without, of course, neglecting the others. Experience has shown that it is always necessary to adapt dissemination methods to local cultural, political and other con-

<sup>5</sup> Armed forces, National Societies, government authorities, universities, schools, medical circles, the media and the general public.

ditions. It is therefore very important to identify people, in particular within the armed forces and the National Societies, who are in a position to relay and spread the humanitarian message effectively.

Dissemination does much to underpin ICRC operations in countries beset by armed conflict, but it is also a necessary activity in countries spared that kind of violence, for if humanitarian rules are understood and accepted in peacetime they will be more readily respected should war occur. Most ICRC delegations therefore work closely with the National Societies to carry out dissemination programmes.

As part of its efforts in this direction, the ICRC offers traineeships in Geneva for people whose work involves promoting knowledge of international humanitarian law and the Movement's principles and ideals. In 1990, 24 lawyers, academics and National Society representatives from all over the world took part in such programmes.

### **New publications**

As part of its work in Colombia, the ICRC cooperated with the Colombian Red Cross to produce publications informing the general public about the basic rules of humanitarian law and the protection to which they are entitled in the event of disturbances or internal conflict. Some 15,000 copies were distributed over the year.

After the Gulf crisis arose in the Middle East, the ICRC published a new version of "Rules for Behaviour in Combat" for the coalition and Iraqi armed forces. This combined Arabic-English version of the manual, entitled "Code of Conduct for Combatants", was adapted to the particular situation in the Gulf and, in addition to humanitarian rules, contained

first-aid information. Some 100,000 copies were printed.

### **Courses and seminars**

For dissemination purposes the ICRC works closely with the League, the National Societies, the Henry Dunant Institute and organizations outside the Movement. The courses and seminars held in 1990 were largely intended for the armed forces, National Societies, government authorities and academic circles.<sup>6</sup>

#### *— for the armed forces*

Although the main responsibility for dissemination to this target group lies with the States party to the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC joins in by setting up programmes to encourage instruction in international humanitarian law as part of military training. It passes on its experience to future instructors and legal advisers, helps to produce teaching material and engages in dialogue as a way of fostering understanding of its humanitarian work.

To this end, as in previous years, the ICRC organized the following courses for members of the armed forces:

- centralized courses for senior officers from all countries, held since 1976 in conjunction with the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy;
- decentralized courses organized jointly with national armed forces in their respective countries and held since 1984 for senior officers holding command posts.

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<sup>6</sup> Readers interested in details of the various dissemination seminars, courses and lectures will find them in the corresponding issues of *Dissemination* magazine, which they may order from the ICRC, 19 avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1990 three centralized courses, attended by a total of 129 officers from 55 countries, were held in San Remo. A course in Geneva for medical officers was attended by 18 participants from 12 countries. In addition, the ICRC for the first time organized a special course for commanders of military academies and those responsible for armed forces training. Likewise for the first time, seminars on international humanitarian law were held in Romania and the USSR; they were attended by 250 and 330 officers respectively. In the USSR the course was led by the Soviet Army Chief of Staff and attended by regional military commanders and legal advisers.

In the field, ICRC delegates to the armed forces gave 15 courses (11 national and 4 regional), attended by 447 officers and covering 38 countries. Nine of the 15 courses took place in Africa and were attended by servicemen from 29 countries. For the first time, these courses were organized on a regional basis, an innovation that met with a very favourable response.

Finally, ICRC delegations made an ongoing contribution to dissemination in the armed forces through lectures, seminars and other contacts.

#### *— for the National Societies*

The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a role to play in spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement. Their help in putting programmes of action into effect is therefore important, as is the appropriate training for their staff. If asked, the ICRC provides support and advice and, with the League, gives courses at the regional and national levels for officials who will be responsible for future National Society dissemination programmes.

The 1990 Dissemination Award was given by the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo to Pedro Ramón Varela Aparicio, head of dissemination at the Salvadoran Red Cross, for 10 years of faithful work. Mr. Varela Aparicio was one of the first members of a Latin American National Society to attend a regional ICRC-League dissemination course.

#### *— for government and diplomatic circles*

The ICRC regularly reminds governments of their obligation under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols to make those texts widely known in order to ensure their application, and accordingly gave courses and lectures at meetings for diplomats and government officials, in particular in New York, The Hague and Great Britain.

#### *— for universities*

The academic world is of twofold interest to the ICRC, which seeks to promote international humanitarian law by encouraging teaching and research, and also to give future national leaders a heightened awareness of that body of law and of humanitarian work in general.

In the period under review, the ICRC continued its efforts to this end, in particular by working with National Societies to organize courses and seminars in Poland, in Switzerland and at a number of universities in Europe, the United States and Egypt.

#### **Paul Reuter Prize**

On 15 November 1990, the deadline for nominations for the 1991 Paul Reuter Prize, there were 10 candidates. The prize of 2,000 Swiss francs is awarded in recognition of particularly deserving work in the area of international humanitarian law.