

Colombie, mais aussi le Pérou et le Mexique. Enfin, 7 % iront au Moyen-Orient et à l'Afrique du Nord, en particulier pour Israël, les territoires occupés et les territoires autonomes, et l'Irak.

Il a été rappelé, en outre, que l'année 1999 marque le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la signature des Conventions de Genève. Le CICR a lancé, dans 12 pays touchés par la guerre, un projet intitulé «Les voix de la guerre». Il s'agit de donner la parole à ceux qui ont vécu la guerre pour leur permettre d'expliquer comment ils perçoivent le droit international humanitaire et de dire ce qu'ils attendent de l'avenir. Cette consultation sera également menée dans six pays où règne la paix, auprès de personnes pour qui la guerre est un phénomène étranger qu'elles ne connaissent qu'à travers les médias. Un rapport sera ensuite rédigé pour engager un vaste débat sur le sujet.

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## **The principal challenges which the ICRC has to face in 1999**

Press conference by **Jean-Daniel Tauxe**, Director of Operations, 20 January 1999

**A** NUMBER of major trends emerge from an analysis of conflict situations in 1998 and they must be taken into account when carrying out humanitarian operations. Generally speaking, conflicts today have a tendency

- to be unpredictable (as shown by the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the events in Indonesia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Kosovo);
- to expand and engulf whole regions (as have the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan);
- to drag on with no prospect of settlement (Sudan, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka);
- to be reactivated (Angola and Iraq).

Impoverishment is another serious problem. The widening gap between rich and poor throughout the world has led to an inexorable increase in crime and violence. As a result, in almost every country where the ICRC is working, conflict situations have been exacerbated by acts of pure banditry.

Finally, from a humanitarian point of view, civilians caught up in conflicts are no longer simply victims; they have also become targets, as is the case in the Balkans, Central Africa, Sierra Leone and Colombia.

The changing nature of conflicts presents the ICRC with two major challenges, the first having to do with access to victims, the second with ensuring respect for international humanitarian law. Various types of difficulties are involved.

The ICRC's methods of action, which are based on the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence, are increasingly brought into question and it is becoming more and more difficult to have them accepted. In volatile situations, the organization's ability to act is hampered by the need to ensure the safety of the victims and of humanitarian workers. Finally, an ever greater number of players are involved in the violence, and it is extremely important to find out who they are and to make them aware of their responsibilities.

For the ICRC, the main task consists in developing strategies to meet these challenges. In the first place, it must remain in close proximity to the victims while taking security constraints into account. Secondly, it must broaden its network of contacts while keeping up a dialogue with its traditional political and military negotiating partners and with other players as well, in particular representatives of civil society and of the economic sector.

In 1998 a great number of political and security constraints prevented the ICRC from fully achieving its planned objectives in countries such as Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the organization maintained a permanent presence in 58 countries and its delegates were able to visit over 190,000 persons held in about 1,300 places of detention. Moreover, 64,000 tonnes of relief supplies valued at 76 million Swiss francs were distributed in 50 countries.

The field budget for 1999 amounts to 660,169,500 Swiss francs. This is slightly less than the 1998 budget, which was initially set at 675 million francs.

The ICRC has introduced a new system for defining its objectives and drawing up its budget. This system is based on target populations rather than on activities, and objectives are set in terms of results. The new approach should make it possible to assess the needs of the victims with greater precision and to carry out a more accurate analysis of the environment in which they live. The 1999 budget is thus both more explicit and more realistic in terms of objectives.

The greater part of the budget (48.2%) will be spent in Africa, with priority being given to Central Africa, the Horn of Africa, Sierra Leone and neighbouring countries. The rest of the budget has been allocated as

follows: 19.9 % will go to Europe and North America (the Balkans in particular); 17% to Asia and the Pacific (mainly Afghanistan and Indonesia); 7.9% to Latin America (especially Colombia, but also Peru and Mexico); and 7% to the Middle East and North Africa (Israel, the occupied territories and the autonomous territories, and Iraq, in particular).

To mark the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions, which is to be celebrated in 1999, the ICRC has launched a project entitled "People on War" in 12 countries affected by armed conflict. The object is to enable those who have lived through war to speak up and explain how they perceive international humanitarian law and what they expect of the future. The survey will also be carried out in six countries where peace prevails so as to obtain the views of people whose only knowledge of war comes from the media. At the end of the survey a report will be drawn up with a view to generating a broad debate.

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## **Mise en œuvre du droit international humanitaire**

Chronique semestrielle

de législation et de jurisprudence nationales

juillet-décembre 1998<sup>1</sup>

### **A) Législation**

#### **Bénin**

Par le décret n° 98-155 du 27 avril 1998, une « Commission nationale pour la mise en œuvre du droit international humanitaire » a été créée. Elle a notamment pour mandat de veiller au respect et à la mise en œuvre effective de ce droit, d'encourager sa promotion, de procéder à sa diffusion et à son enseignement.

<sup>1</sup> Cette chronique paraît dorénavant deux fois par an dans la *Revue*, sous la responsabilité des Services consultatifs en droit international huma-

nitaire, CICR. Voir *RICR*, n° 832, décembre 1998, p. 789.