

A note from the Editor

In planning the present issue of the Review we decided to start by evoking a triumph in Red Cross history: the awarding in 1901 of the first Nobel Peace Prize to Henry Dunant — a prize he shared with the French pacifist Frédéric Passy. We could not have imagined that in the same issue we would have to announce a tragedy: the violent death of six ICRC staff members in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 26 April 2001, two ICRC delegates and four Congolese colleagues left the town of Bunia, in the north-east of the country, to assess the medical needs of health posts and the food and other requirements of people displaced by the hostilities. A perfectly routine Red Cross mission. At the time the incident occurred, the area was calm. The motives for the crime are still unknown and no one has yet claimed responsibility for it.

The following day, nonetheless, all 9'000 of the ICRC's staff in the field resumed their normal activities for the victims of the many conflicts that continue to ravage our planet. They did this with, perhaps, some doubt in their hearts about the respect shown by bearers of weapons for the ICRC's mission and emblem.

On a less tragic note, this issue of the Review contains several articles — by A. Pasquier, F. Grunewald/L. Tessier, C. Bruderlein and M. Studer in particular — dealing with various aspects of humanitarian action and exploring ways in which it might be adapted to the conditions imposed by modern forms of warfare. Other contributions examine problems pertaining to the implementation of international humanitarian law, notably by judicial means. The article by

Fischer takes readers back in time: it relates the 1962 missile crisis, one of the most extraordinary challenges that the ICRC has ever had to face.

In the Red Cross and Red Crescent section, the Review again publishes items that define the ICRC's position on several issues of current interest.

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