

# KUALA LUMPUR (regional)

COVERING: Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore



Having worked in Malaysia since 1972, the ICRC established a regional delegation in Kuala Lumpur in 2001 and an independent mission in Japan in 2012. It works with governments and National Societies to promote IHL and humanitarian principles and to gain support for its activities. In Malaysia, the ICRC visits detainees, including detained migrants, and works with authorities to address issues identified during those visits. It enables detained migrants to contact their families. The regional resource centre supports delegations in East and South-East Asia and the Pacific in promoting IHL and strengthening support for the ICRC and for Movement cooperation.

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2014:

- ▶ in Malaysia, people detained at immigration centres and prisons benefited from Movement family-links services, and ICRC visits and cooperation with detention authorities in training prison health staff
- ▶ communities in Sabah, Malaysia, with limited access to health services learnt first aid at training sessions, held as part of Malaysian Red Crescent Society/ICRC efforts to address health needs there
- ▶ the authorities and think-tanks drew attention to key humanitarian issues, notably at a symposium in Japan on sexual violence in armed conflict and a regional workshop in Singapore on human trafficking
- ▶ senior naval officers from 12 countries discussed the application of IHL at sea during a workshop organized by the Singapore Armed Forces and the ICRC
- ▶ Japan ratified the Arms Trade Treaty and expressed support for the Montreux document on private military and security companies
- ▶ the Singapore Red Cross Society and the ICRC concluded their first joint private sector fundraising campaign

## EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	1,436
Assistance	480
Prevention	2,635
Cooperation with National Societies	536
General	-
	<b>5,088</b>

of which: Overheads 311

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>93%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	16
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	34

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**MEDIUM**

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>	
RCMs collected	65
RCMs distributed	175
Phone calls facilitated between family members	125
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	4
People reunited with their families	3
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	16,148
Detainees visited and monitored individually	297
Number of visits carried out	32
Number of places of detention visited	12
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	131
RCMs distributed	43
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	733

## CONTEXT

Irregular migration and human trafficking remained pressing concerns for authorities and the public in the region.

In Malaysia, the Royal Commission of Inquiry concluded its hearings on issues surrounding migrants in Sabah and drafted recommendations for addressing them. The expiration of an amnesty programme for irregular migrant workers, and crime-prevention measures – including those led by the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCOM), established following the 2013 Lahad Datu clashes – reportedly led to hundreds of arrests and almost 60,000 deportations. The Malaysian government and armed forces/police were preoccupied with two major air mishaps; one involved the downing of an airliner in Ukraine, and sparked public interest in Malaysia in the Rome Statute. Religious and ethnic issues continued to be subjects of intense social and political debate. The government announced measures, such as strengthening its anti-sedition law, to allay concern over the alleged recruitment of Malaysians by armed groups abroad.

In Japan, the cabinet approved reinterpretation of the country's self-defence policy as set out in the constitution. Japan remained influential in humanitarian affairs; it made representations in international fora on such issues as sexual violence during armed conflict, and launched initiatives for tackling them. The recent restructuring of its aid programme emphasized bilateral cooperation; as a result, contributions to multilateral mechanisms decreased.

The Singaporean government enacted tighter immigration policies. The country continued to promote itself as a hub for multinational corporations/businesses and humanitarian/international organizations and launched a regional command centre to support countries affected by natural disasters.

Brunei Darussalam chaired the disaster-management committee of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Countries in the region contributed military and police personnel to peacekeeping operations abroad.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued to work with the national authorities, armed/self-defence forces, other parties concerned and the National Societies in the region, as well as with multilateral organizations/bodies, to draw attention to humanitarian concerns and address them. It strove to increase awareness of IHL and humanitarian principles/issues, and of its work.

In Malaysia, delegates visited – in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures – people detained in immigration centres and prisons. Afterwards, the ICRC communicated findings/recommendations confidentially to the authorities, to help them ensure that detainees' treatment and living conditions were in line with internationally recognized standards; the ICRC also organized a seminar, jointly with the authorities, on addressing health needs in detention. The ICRC continued to suggest areas of cooperation in its discussions with detention authorities. Detained migrants received hygiene items to help them safeguard their health, especially after outbreaks of disease.

The Malaysian Red Crescent Society and the ICRC continued to assess the health situation in Sabah and to develop an approach to addressing humanitarian needs there, carrying out field trips,

conducting first-aid training sessions for members of communities with limited access to health services, and consulting health authorities and other parties concerned.

Members of families dispersed by migration or detention restored/maintained contact with relatives through Movement family-links services.

The ICRC helped the region's armed and self-defence forces enrich their troops' knowledge of IHL and the ICRC, during training sessions at their command and staff colleges and training centres and at related local/overseas events. Events included workshops with senior officers from naval forces in the Asia-Pacific region on the application of IHL at sea, and with ESSCOM personnel on internationally recognized standards for law enforcement.

The ICRC kept up dialogue and cooperation with governments and other regional actors to foster understanding of humanitarian issues, IHL and the ICRC. It organized, with a Singaporean think-tank, a regional consultative workshop on protecting victims of human trafficking. Through public campaigns, briefings and other events, the media, academics, members of civil society – including Islamic organizations in Malaysia – the National Societies and the ICRC urged further exchanges of information and cooperation in addressing humanitarian concerns. The Japanese authorities and the Japanese Red Cross Society, together with the ICRC, drew attention, in their programmes and activities, to humanitarian concerns.

Japan ratified the Arms Trade Treaty; Singapore signed it. Japan also expressed its support for the Montreux document on private military and security companies. Government departments throughout the region received ICRC support for advancing domestic IHL implementation.

With ICRC assistance, all four National Societies strengthened their capacities to restore family links and/or promote IHL, including through the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme. The Singapore Red Cross Society and the ICRC concluded their first joint private sector fundraising campaign; they continued to refine their strategy in this regard. The Japanese and Singaporean National Societies supported ICRC operations abroad, for example by seconding their experienced/skilled staff to emergency units after natural disasters. Movement partners in the region consolidated their approach to humanitarian affairs through regular coordination/communication efforts.

The Kuala Lumpur delegation's resource centre continued to provide expertise for ICRC delegations in East and South-East Asia and the Pacific, to enhance cooperation/prevention-related activities.

## CIVILIANS

### Members of families dispersed by migration or detention maintain contact through Movement family-links services

People used Malaysian Red Crescent/ICRC family-links services to re-establish/maintain contact with family members detained abroad. The families of three persons held at the US internment facility at Guantanamo Bay Naval Station in Cuba kept in touch with their relatives through RCMs, pre-recorded video messages, or oral messages relayed by an ICRC delegate who had visited the Guantanamo Bay internees.

The Malaysian Red Crescent and the Singapore Red Cross conducted training sessions to enhance their staff/volunteers' skills in restoring

family links. At their meetings, Movement partners in the region encouraged the inclusion of modules on such subjects as restoring family links and the Safer Access Framework in the standard training curriculum for national/regional disaster response teams.

### **Communities in Sabah learn first aid and have their health needs assessed**

The Malaysian Red Crescent/ICRC sought to learn more about the health situation in Sabah and develop an approach to addressing humanitarian needs there. They conducted field trips to assess the health needs of communities and continued to consult health/local authorities on ways to meet these needs; a proposal to jointly establish a mobile clinic was discussed. The Malaysian Red Crescent branch in Sabah received encouragement and support to build up its capacities in first aid and other health-related activities. To help allay health concerns encountered on field trips, and foster working relationships with the communities and the local authorities, National Society/ICRC teams organized first-aid training sessions for community members. Thus, 52 people gained the skills necessary to deal with minor trauma common to their environment.

### **Stakeholders in the region discuss how to protect victims of human trafficking**

Malaysian authorities and the ICRC met to discuss the prospects for resuming cooperation in ensuring the welfare of victims of human trafficking housed in government-run shelters. Parties concerned in the region exchanged views with the ICRC on issues relating to human trafficking and migration. At a regional consultative workshop organized by the ICRC and a Singaporean think-tank, over 30 academics, representatives of international agencies/NGOs, authorities from Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan and the ICRC discussed their roles, and shared best practices, in protecting victims of human trafficking. The workshop also helped to encourage coordination among actors tackling the issue.

### **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

In Malaysia, some 16,150 people (including migrants, common-law detainees and security detainees) held at 6 immigration detention centres and 6 prisons, including 2 juvenile centres, received ICRC visits, conducted according to the organization's standard procedures. No visits were made to migrants held at centres in Sabah, owing to various constraints on the side of the detaining authorities; the ICRC continued to seek their agreement on resuming visits.

After the visits, the ICRC shared its findings/recommendations confidentially with the authorities, with a view to helping them ensure that detainees' treatment and living conditions were in line with internationally recognized standards. Building on past dialogue, delegates followed up with the authorities on addressing the special needs of minors in their custody, particularly those held at immigration detention centres, where adults continued to be housed with minors. Certain unaccompanied minors were given special attention, including through referrals to other Movement partners or, in the case of children seeking asylum, to UNHCR.

### **Malaysian prison and health staff learn more about addressing health needs in detention**

The needs of other vulnerable groups – the elderly, the sick, victims of human trafficking and pregnant and breastfeeding women – alternatives to detention for them, and other concerns linked to prison management all remained on the agenda of discussions between detaining authorities and the ICRC.

At a seminar organized by the Prison Department and the ICRC, almost 30 people – prisons managers, prison health staff and Health Ministry officials – added to what they knew about addressing health needs in custodial settings. The Prison Department also showed some interest in working with the ICRC to train prison staff in addressing the specific needs of detained minors; this was partly follow-up to a past ICRC assessment of the mental-health needs of juveniles in the Henry Gurney schools for prisoners. The Prison Department also welcomed ICRC participation in some of their seminars/events, particularly one focused on their concept of 'healthy prisons' and another that gathered regional experts to discuss how to improve the design of correctional facilities. The immigration authorities, the Health Ministry and the ICRC discussed the legal requirements for the ICRC to establish and run a clinic at one immigration detention centre.

### **Particularly vulnerable detainees in Malaysia meet some of their needs with National Society/ICRC assistance**

Detainees, including migrants, and their relatives, some of whom were abroad, located or stayed in touch with each other using ICRC family-links services, often provided with the support of the Malaysian Red Crescent. These included RCMs, phone calls and 'safe and well' messages. A few foreign inmates, notably minors and the sick, returned to their countries of origin with ICRC support for their travel. Through Movement efforts, the body of a deceased detainee was repatriated to her family abroad.

Some 8,380 detainees at immigration detention centres, including minors, improved their hygiene with soap donated by the ICRC, notably in response to an outbreak of typhoid fever at one facility; over 170 women received female hygiene kits.

### **ACTORS OF INFLUENCE**

#### **The Arms Trade Treaty is ratified by Japan, signed by Singapore**

Governments in the region pursued efforts to implement IHL, supported by their National Societies and the ICRC. Notably, Japan ratified the Arms Trade Treaty, and Singapore signed it. Japan also expressed support for the Montreux document on private military and security companies. Without acceding to the Rome Statute, Malaysia considered incorporating its provisions in domestic criminal law. A plan to hold a regional round-table on IHL implementation was cancelled owing to various considerations.

Japanese authorities received ICRC encouragement to reinvigorate their national IHL committee. The Malaysian national IHL committee and the Malaysian Red Crescent followed up pledges in preparation for the 32nd International Conference. The Malaysian government and the ICRC held meetings to discuss a headquarters agreement.

#### **Japanese government draws on ICRC advice to highlight the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict**

Government officials across the region, especially Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministry officials and Japanese parliamentarians, advanced their understanding of IHL, humanitarian principles/issues, and the Movement's work, at various events and through regular contact with the ICRC.

The Japanese government drew on the ICRC's advice to formulate, for its diplomatic representations, positions on the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict, and organized, with the Japanese Red Cross/ICRC, a public symposium on the topic. The Japanese

authorities, the National Society and the ICRC discussed how to improve their operational partnership.

Malaysian officials, including diplomats, learnt more about the ICRC at sessions periodically included in their training programmes. Drafting of an IHL handbook for parliamentarians continued.

The ASEAN departments of the countries covered and the ICRC continued to interact regularly on subjects of common interest: for instance, at a meeting of the ASEAN disaster-management committee chaired by Brunei Darussalam (see *Jakarta*), a potential role for the Movement in improving regional disaster-management and emergency response was discussed.

### **Naval officers in the Asia-Pacific region discuss application of IHL at sea**

Instructors/officers of the region's armed/self-defence forces attending command and staff colleges/warfare training centres or participating in national/multilateral exercises enriched their knowledge of IHL and the Movement during ICRC training sessions/presentations at related events, such as: an annual seminar at the National Institute for Defense Studies in Japan; a Malaysian Armed Forces IHL course that drew attention to the legal obligation to protect medical services; the International Military Law and Operations Conference, which used, as a reference, an ICRC report on the use of force; and workshops abroad on incorporating IHL in military operational planning (see *International law and policy*). Over 30 senior officers from 12 navies in the Asia-Pacific region discussed the application of IHL at sea during a workshop hosted jointly by the Singapore Armed Forces and the ICRC. Malaysian and foreign officers studying at a peacekeeping training institute also attended ICRC-facilitated predeployment briefings.

Owing to various constraints, work on e-learning modules on IHL for the Japanese Self-Defense Forces was delayed. The Malaysian and Singaporean armed forces maintained dialogue with the ICRC on potential areas of cooperation. With ICRC support, the training departments of the Malaysian armed forces began to discuss the updating of their IHL curricula.

Cooperation with the Malaysian police continued: at ICRC information sessions, over 120 instructors and officers, including members of the Criminal Investigation Division, refreshed their understanding of internationally recognized policing standards. Police, navy, air force and coast guard units seconded to ESSCOM discussed these standards during an ICRC-facilitated workshop; at follow-up meetings, their unit commanders considered other training initiatives with the ICRC.

### **Think-tanks, universities, media and other sections of civil society extend humanitarian debate**

A Singaporean think-tank hosted, jointly with the ICRC, a regional conference on human trafficking (see *Civilians*). A Japanese university, the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the ICRC organized a symposium on new technologies in warfare. University students, among them journalism majors, learnt more about IHL through: a new postgraduate course in humanitarian affairs offered by a Malaysian university; ICRC courses, including one in Japan for East Asian students and National Society staff; internships; and competitions at local/Asia-Pacific level (see *Beijing*). At

a round-table, Islamic NGOs in Malaysia and the ICRC discussed humanitarian principles/activities.

The media reported on humanitarian issues and Movement activities, aided by ICRC-provided materials, regular contact with the organization, and participation in workshops/conferences, notably one in Japan that was attended by over 20 senior editors from 12 countries. Various audiences obtained information on IHL and the Movement through online/traditional media and public events such as celebrations of "150 years of humanitarian action" in Japan, Malaysia and Singapore.

The Singapore Red Cross and the ICRC concluded their first joint fundraising campaign, albeit with limited results; consultations with the local/regional business and aid/philanthropy sectors helped to refine the two organizations' strategy in this regard.

### **RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

The region's National Societies, with support from other Movement partners, enhanced their ability to respond to humanitarian needs (see *Civilians*) and strengthened their organizational frameworks: for instance, the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent Society reviewed its statutes and embarked on internal reforms. Seminars on the Safer Access Framework, including online, helped strengthen National Society staff/volunteers' ability to reach vulnerable communities.

The National Societies in Japan and Singapore supported ICRC operations abroad, seconding their experienced/skilled staff to emergency units responding to Typhoon Haiyan (see *Philippines*). The Japanese Red Cross prepared its staff for work in overseas operations through Movement-organized training, particularly in emergency deployment.

The National Societies promoted IHL/humanitarian principles/the Movement's activities in their countries. The Japanese Red Cross appointed some 50 trained members as focal points for IHL promotion.

All National Societies continued to seek ways to best integrate the Exploring Humanitarian Law programme into their countries' educational systems. With ICRC support: the Brunei Darussalam Red Crescent considered implementation plans with its Education Ministry; the Malaysian and Singaporean National Societies looked into incorporating the programme in their youth-oriented activities; and the Malaysian Red Crescent prepared teaching kits for volunteers.

Movement partners in the region consolidated their approaches to humanitarian issues through regular coordination/communication efforts, including joint orientation sessions for newly elected leaders.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)<sup>1</sup></b>					
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			<b>UAMs/SCs*</b>		
RCMs collected		65			
RCMs distributed		175			
Phone calls facilitated between family members		125			
<b>Reunifications, transfers and repatriations</b>					
People reunited with their families		3			
<b>Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		45	7	6	9
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		2			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		4			
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		1			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		51	10	7	10
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>		2			
<b>Documents</b>					
People to whom travel documents were issued		1			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)<sup>1</sup></b>					
<b>ICRC visits</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Minors</b>	
Detainees visited		16,148	1,598	946	
			<b>Women</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Detainees visited and monitored individually		297	34	12	108
Detainees newly registered		278	31	12	105
Number of visits carried out		32			
Number of places of detention visited		12			
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected		131			
RCMs distributed		43			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		733			

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

1. Malaysia

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Health<sup>1</sup></b>				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		6		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		9		

1. Malaysia