

# SRI LANKA



ICRC delegation ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic centre

The ICRC has worked in Sri Lanka since 1989. Operations focus on assisting civilians affected by the past armed conflict, in particular working with returnees, former detainees and other especially vulnerable residents to boost their economic security; visiting detainees and aiding the authorities in improving prison management; helping clarify the fate of missing persons and supporting their families; and providing backing for the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society's family-links services. It also supports the armed forces' training in IHL.

## YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

**HIGH**

## KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS

In 2014:

- ▶ resettled/returnee families, particularly vulnerable households headed by women, rehabilitees or disabled persons, received livelihood support and improved their access to water through ICRC-assisted projects
- ▶ the authorities gave their approval for an ICRC assessment of the needs of families of persons missing in connection with the past conflict, and engaged in discussions on addressing their needs
- ▶ treatment and living conditions in detention were monitored/discussed during visits and dialogue between the authorities and the ICRC, resulting in infrastructural improvements that benefited all detainees
- ▶ the armed forces/police developed their training programmes with ICRC technical support, so that their personnel knew more about, and were better placed to apply, internationally recognized standards
- ▶ the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation eased out of ICRC support and pursued efforts to secure alternative sources of funding, aided by past ICRC coaching in this regard

## EXPENDITURE (in KCHF)

Protection	2,243
Assistance	1,772
Prevention	865
Cooperation with National Societies	323
General	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,202</b>

of which: Overheads 317

## IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	<b>97%</b>
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## PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	13
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	64

PROTECTION	Total
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>	
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>	
RCMs collected	23
RCMs distributed	105
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	93
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>	
<b>ICRC visits</b>	
Detainees visited	944
Detainees visited and monitored individually	944
Number of visits carried out	74
Number of places of detention visited	33
<b>Restoring family links</b>	
RCMs collected	95
RCMs distributed	23
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative	22

ASSISTANCE	2014 Targets (up to)	Achieved
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>		
<b>Economic security, water and habitat</b> (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Cash	Beneficiaries 3,100	6,472
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries 10,700	17,395
<b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>		
<b>Physical rehabilitation</b>		
Centres supported	Structures 1	1
Patients receiving services	Patients 1,000	649

## CONTEXT

Sri Lanka continued to recover from the armed conflict that ended in 2009. Most IDPs returned to their areas of origin, following large-scale efforts by the State and aid providers to rebuild government services and demine large stretches of land. However, many returnees had yet to re-establish their livelihoods, and access to basic services in some areas remained inadequate. Thousands of people remained unaccounted for, leaving relatives in distress over their uncertain fate.

The government continued to implement its action plan, based on the recommendations of the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission, for tackling the needs of those affected by the conflict. It completed an island-wide census of deaths, missing persons, injured and/or disabled people and property damage; the aim was to compile a list and draw up plans to compensate families affected. The Commission of Inquiry on Disappearances was expanded into the Presidential Commission to Investigate into Complaints Regarding Missing Persons (PCICMP); its mandate included cases dating to 1983. It was also asked to work on the provision of counselling services to the families of missing persons. The government formally objected to a UN Human Rights Council resolution calling for an international investigation into human rights abuses and war crimes reportedly committed during the conflict.

Most of the people arrested in connection with the past conflict had been released by the government; fresh arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act continued.

Natural disasters and sporadic violence stemming from intercommunal tensions in parts of the country resulted in injuries/deaths and hampered access to basic services.

## ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued to help in dealing with the consequences of the past armed conflict, for instance by offering technical support to the Sri Lankan government in this regard.

The ICRC continued to provide rehabilitees – people arrested in connection with the past conflict who had been released after being held in rehabilitation centres – with assistance to restart income-generating activities. In March, the ICRC concluded the monitoring of a livelihood-support project, launched in 2013 with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, that enabled returnee households headed by vulnerable women or disabled persons to cover their basic needs. The ICRC also obtained the authorities' approval to implement livelihood-support and water supply/sanitation improvement projects for more communities, particularly in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts.

The ICRC pursued its dialogue with the authorities on the need for a comprehensive response to the multifaceted needs of the families of persons who went missing during the past conflict. It regularly shared with the PCICMP its views/expertise on such matters as data centralization, a national mechanism to address the issue of missing persons and provision of psychosocial support to the families. The ICRC began an assessment of the families' needs, which would serve as the basis for future action.

Delegates visited – in line with the ICRC's standard procedures – detainees held in facilities run by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms (MoRPR) and the newly created Ministry of

Law and Order (MoLO), which oversaw police facilities, to monitor their treatment and living conditions. They also visited migrants, refugees and asylum seekers under the purview of the Department of Immigration and Emigration. Following visits, delegates shared findings and recommendations confidentially with the authorities, who also received a summary of findings since the resumption of ICRC visits to MoRPR facilities in 2013. The ICRC expanded its dialogue with detention authorities to include matters concerning all detainees, such as overcrowding. It focused on helping the authorities improve prison infrastructure/general premises (e.g. toilets, prison hospital facilities and a vocational training room), to the benefit of thousands of inmates.

The ICRC also maintained contact with government representatives, the armed/security forces, and the media, academia, and other members of civil society. It organized training sessions/events to help them further their understanding of IHL and of the ICRC's role in a post-conflict setting, promote incorporation of IHL in domestic law/security forces' training/university curricula, and generate support for the Movement's work. After completing a curriculum review with ICRC technical support, the Sri Lankan police introduced a new training programme to strengthen its personnel's understanding of internationally recognized standards in law enforcement.

With ICRC support, the national IHL committee organized teams to follow up the recommendations of a compatibility study comparing domestic legislation with IHL treaties.

The ICRC ended its technical and material support for the Jaffna Jaipur Centre for Disability Rehabilitation (JJCDR); the centre's management had received ICRC coaching in raising funds from various sources.

The National Society/ICRC continued to offer tracing and RCM services for people to restore contact with relatives, including those separated from them by migration or detention. With ICRC financial/material/technical assistance, the National Society built up its emergency response capacities, its branches, particularly in the north, and its family-links services.

## CIVILIANS

### North-eastern communities secure their livelihoods and access to safe water and sanitation facilities

At the conclusion of a National Society/ICRC project launched in the Mullaitivu district in 2013, a study conducted in March among 648 beneficiary families – all returnee households headed by women or disabled persons – estimated that 80 to 85% of them covered their basic needs with income from ventures started under the project. A total of 500 more vulnerable households (1,867 individuals) – 200 headed by women and disabled persons and 300 by rehabilitees – started/restored income-generating activities in 2014 with ICRC support; at year's end, around 60% of them earned enough to meet household needs.

An additional 1,426 households (4,605 individuals) in six villages in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts stood to benefit from ICRC-supported, community-based agriculture and fishery projects initiated and monitored in coordination with government agencies and community leaders.

Some 7,920 schoolchildren had access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities following the construction of water tanks and

toilets at conflict-affected schools in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts. Close to 9,500 other individuals, including some 3,100 drought-affected persons, were able to cover their household/agricultural water needs after the installation/renovation of wells and hand pumps and/or the distribution of water filters, tanks and pumps in three districts. In the Mullaitivu district, local authorities and health offices were better placed to address the water needs of flood/drought-affected communities because of ICRC-donated materials/equipment for cleaning wells and testing water quality/chlorination; training in this connection was scheduled for 2015.

These activities came within the framework of initiatives begun last year at the authorities' request for livelihood support to rehabilitees. These initiatives also banked on the authorities' acceptance of the ICRC's offer to directly and independently implement assistance projects benefiting returnee and other vulnerable families, specifically in the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, in line with the government's community-support programmes.

### **Dispersed families maintain contact through National Society family-links services**

Dispersed families – particularly those of migrants and refugees at immigration centres – continued to benefit from National Society tracing and RCM services. At information/training sessions and coordination meetings with the ICRC, National Society staff and volunteers added to their knowledge/skills in this regard and sought ways to improve these services. They shared experiences with counterparts from three South Asian National Societies at a workshop on the family-links needs of migrants in detention (see *Nepal*).

### **Government takes steps to address the needs of the families of missing persons**

Thousands of persons missing in connection with the past conflict were still being sought by their families, who submitted tracing requests to National Society branches or the ICRC.

The authorities and the ICRC pursued dialogue on the multifaceted concerns of these families and on the need for a comprehensive response to them, including within the framework of Sri Lanka's post-conflict action plan. Discussions with the PCICMP particularly stressed the need for coordination and data centralization; technical support was also regularly provided to them on such topics as the creation of a national mechanism to address the issue, forensics and the issuance of certificates of absence in lieu of death certificates. The Health Ministry and the PCICMP organized two workshops to adapt the ICRC's approach to supporting missing persons – as found in handbooks/materials provided by the ICRC – to the Sri Lankan context, to serve as a reference for a government programme providing assistance/support services for families in the north (see *Context*). With the government's approval and a view to obtaining baseline information to determine future action, the ICRC began a countrywide assessment of the needs of families.

With the authorities' consent, the ICRC pursued efforts to trace cases related to medical evacuations carried out in the north during the conflict.

### **Specialists explore ways to improve local forensic capacity**

The National Society received ICRC material and logistical support to help them retrieve bodies after a landslide that buried some 150 homes. Final approval for a set of draft national guidelines for managing human remains after disasters, drawn up by a Health Ministry-chaired committee, remained pending. At presentations

and meetings, the country's forensic specialists and the ICRC discussed ways to build local capacities, touching on improving gravesite management in relation to missing persons and forensic authorities' role in detention.

## **PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM**

### **Needs of detainees, including detained migrants, feature in expanded dialogue between the authorities and the ICRC**

Detainees in facilities under the authority of the MoRPR and the newly created MoLO (see *Actors of influence*), including those held under the latter's Terrorist Investigation Division, were visited and individually monitored by delegates in accordance with the ICRC's standard procedures. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers held under the jurisdiction of the Department of Immigration and Emigration also received visits.

The ICRC consolidated its dialogue and cooperation with prison authorities on matters concerning all categories of detainee. After visits, delegates shared findings and recommendations confidentially with the detaining authorities, to help them improve detainees' treatment and living conditions; the commissioner-general of prisons received written reports – two containing recommendations for specific prisons and one summarizing the ICRC's findings since the resumption of detention visits to MoRPR facilities in April 2013. Following on from past discussions, the MoRPR and the Justice Ministry explored ways to mitigate overcrowding in prisons; preparations were under way for a high-level round-table on the legal and judicial causes of overcrowding. A Prison Administration Act, previously drafted by the Justice Ministry with ICRC support, awaited submission for cabinet approval. Detention authorities exchanged views on overcrowding with their counterparts during a prison management course in Switzerland. At a training session, police investigators learnt more about internationally recognized standards for arrest and detention (see *Actors of influence*).

Detainees, including migrants, restored/maintained contact with their relatives through National Society/ICRC family-links services. The families of 594 detainees visited their relatives in prison through ICRC-sponsored travel.

### **Detainees ease their living conditions thanks to infrastructure improvement projects**

Prison health staff discussed the provision of health services at a workshop organized by the ICRC with the support of the MoRPR and the Ministry of Health; the workshop's findings helped to shape future cooperation, including pilot projects, in this field. The MoRPR accepted the ICRC's offer of technical support for designing new prisons.

The installation of a solar water heating system in the Batticaloa prison kitchen allowed some 350 detainees to benefit from more hygienic conditions, while also cutting maintenance costs. Plans to install more energy-saving kitchen equipment were cancelled after on-site assessments in early 2014 revealed that the more urgent need was for refurbishing the prison's premises. Thus, living conditions for another 5,150 detainees at eight prisons improved following infrastructure improvement projects undertaken in coordination with the authorities, such as the installation/construction of: toilet facilities benefiting 2,100 inmates; a new kitchen serving 1,300 people; exhaust fans to improve ventilation; and a vocational training room. Sick inmates stood to benefit from the renovation of the pharmacy and the TB laboratory at the Welikada prison hospital.

Some 17,400 detainees eased their daily conditions with ICRC-provided toiletries, cleaning products and recreational materials.

## WOUNDED AND SICK

### JJCDR takes steps toward sustainability

Some 650 patients regained mobility and functional ability with the help of various services offered by the JJCDR, the only longstanding physical rehabilitation centre in the north, which produced 173 prostheses and 95 orthoses, and other assistive devices in 2014.

As planned, by the middle of the year, the JJCDR eased out of ICRC technical and financial support; it received a last shipment of ICRC-donated materials and components to cover its production needs up to the end of 2015. The centre's management pursued efforts to raise funds from various sources, aided by past ICRC coaching in this regard.

## ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Government representatives, armed/security forces officials, members of civil society, academics and the general public furthered their understanding of post-conflict humanitarian priorities (see *Context* and *Civilians*), IHL and the Movement at various events. These events also aimed to cultivate support for the Movement's work and for the incorporation of IHL provisions in domestic law, security forces' training and operations, and university curricula.

They – notably legal officers and ministry/government agency officials from the External Affairs and Justice Ministries and the Attorney General's Office – contributed to discussions held during: a panel discussion on acts of terrorism and IHL; workshops/conferences focusing on the "Strengthening IHL" process, on issues such as those raised by the Health Care in Danger project (see *Brussels*), and on sexual violence in armed conflict (see *Nepal*); a regional advanced IHL session (see *New Delhi*); and the biannual South Asian Teaching Session on IHL – one in Nepal and another hosted by Sri Lanka for 50 participants from nine countries. Under an External Affairs Ministry initiative, trainee diplomats were introduced to the basic principles of IHL.

University students expanded/tested their knowledge of IHL by taking a postgraduate course online and by participating in national/regional moot court and essay-writing competitions (see *Beijing* and *New Delhi*).

### National IHL committee forms teams to follow up IHL integration

Legal officers from the region learnt the finer points of drafting IHL implementing legislation during a technical workshop hosted by the Sri Lankan government and the ICRC. Sri Lanka's national IHL committee continued to work on the translation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions into the local languages. Following the completion of a compatibility study comparing domestic legislation with IHL treaties to which Sri Lanka was already a party, the national IHL committee, with ICRC support, organized sub-committees to look into the study's recommendations.

### Police force introduces new training curriculum revised with ICRC support

At ICRC workshops, over 240 army battalion commanders and their deputies improved their grasp of IHL and of its application in their operations. Some 80 army instructors updated their IHL teaching skills at a trainers' course and at workshops in San Remo, Italy and China (see *International law and policy*). Over 235

officers – including from foreign forces, logistics and civil-military relations offices and those attending a UN staff officers' course – learnt more about IHL at information sessions.

The Sri Lanka Police Department introduced a new training curriculum across three recruitment levels, after concluding an ICRC-supported process to review/develop its training programme. At training sessions, hundreds of police personnel, from new recruits to senior officers, added to their knowledge of internationally recognized standards for the use of force; 29 investigators were trained in standards specific to arrest and detention. Police instructors also received guidance for supporting officers in the conduct of field operations.

The MoLO, created in 2013 to oversee/develop the police force, and the ICRC discussed areas of cooperation, such as detention-related matters and the finalization of the force's departmental orders. The latter, which was revised with ICRC input and circulated by the Attorney-General among the offices concerned for comment, was being prepared for publication.

During predeployment briefings at the UN peacekeeping training school, 1,790 personnel familiarized themselves with IHL and the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action.

### Media coverage draws attention to post-conflict humanitarian needs

Using information from briefings, updates and other materials provided by the ICRC, journalists wrote articles to help promote, among the general public, IHL and the Movement's work – particularly as it related to post-conflict concerns such as the needs of families of missing persons and those of returnees/rehabilitees (see *Civilians*). Activities commemorating 25 years of ICRC presence in Sri Lanka took place before a broad range of audiences.

## RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

With ICRC financial/technical/material support, the Sri Lankan Red Cross reinforced the emergency response/first-aid capacities of over 220 of its volunteers by conducting courses and examinations and promoting the Safer Access Framework. It also evaluated a livelihood-support project implemented with the ICRC in 2013 (see *Civilians*).

The National Society encouraged volunteerism by honouring volunteers who had served for more than 10 years. It trained over 280 volunteers from 17 branches in promoting IHL and Movement activities and also launched various activities in this regard. The National Society drew on the ICRC's guidance for supporting/reviving its branches, particularly in the north, and for ensuring sustainability through income-generating activities. Its revised statutes and a draft Red Cross Act, prepared in 2013 with ICRC technical support, awaited approval.

At a three-day summit it organized with ICRC funding, the National Society reviewed, with some 20 Movement partners, the results of projects initiated in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and explored further partnerships. Movement components met regularly to ensure a coherent response.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>					
<b>Red Cross messages (RCMs)</b>			<b>UAMs/SCs*</b>		
RCMs collected		23			
RCMs distributed		105			
<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		50	9	2	6
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		93			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		16,064	820	366	1,196
<b>UAMs/SCs*, including unaccompanied demobilized child soldiers</b>			<b>Girls</b>		<b>Demobilized children</b>
UAM/SC cases still being handled by the ICRC/National Society at the end of the reporting period		18	8		
<b>Documents</b>					
People to whom travel documents were issued		53			
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>					
<b>ICRC visits</b>			<b>Women</b>	<b>Minors</b>	
Detainees visited		944	28	19	
			<b>Women</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Detainees visited and monitored individually		944	28	3	16
Detainees newly registered		512	16	3	16
Number of visits carried out		74			
Number of places of detention visited		33			
<b>Restoring family links</b>					
RCMs collected		95			
RCMs distributed		23			
Phone calls made to families to inform them of the whereabouts of a detained relative		22			
Detainees visited by their relatives with ICRC/National Society support		594			
People to whom a detention attestation was issued		332			

\* Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
<b>CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)</b>				
Cash	Beneficiaries	6,472	37%	29%
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	17,395	30%	40%
	<i>of whom IDPs</i>	17,395		
<b>PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)</b>				
<b>Economic security, water and habitat (in some cases provided within a protection programme)</b>				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	17,429		
Cash	Beneficiaries	41		
Water and habitat activities	Beneficiaries	5,502		
<b>Health</b>				
Number of visits carried out by health staff		23		
Number of places of detention visited by health staff		16		
<b>WOUNDED AND SICK</b>				
<b>Physical rehabilitation</b>				
Centres supported	Structures	1		
Patients receiving services	Patients	649	191	48
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	29	9	
Prostheses delivered	Units	173	52	1
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	70		
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	37	3	17
Orthoses delivered	Units	95	10	40
Patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	360	103	46
Crutches delivered	Units	32		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	12		