

CARACAS (regional)

COVERING: Suriname, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean Community: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago



ICRC regional delegation

The Caracas regional delegation was established in 1971. It reinforces the capacities of the region's National Societies in the fields of IHL promotion, restoring family links, emergency response and assistance to victims of violence. It seeks to visit detainees in Venezuela and monitors the humanitarian situation along the Venezuelan border with Colombia. It promotes the incorporation of IHL into national legislation and into the operational procedures and training of the region's armed forces, as well as the inclusion of human rights standards in police manuals and training.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ The Venezuelan defence ministry and the ICRC resumed their cooperation, resulting in the training of military personnel in international policing standards, and military doctors in weapon-wound management.
- ▶ First responders and medical personnel in Venezuelan cities, including people in neighbourhoods under the control of community organizations, trained in providing prompt and adequate life-saving care.
- ▶ People in the Colombia-Venezuela border dealt with the effects of the Colombian conflict and of deportations/returns from Venezuela to Colombia, thanks to health/psychosocial care and family-links services.
- ▶ The military and/or police of 4 Caribbean countries sought to incorporate internationally recognized policing standards in their training/operations through train-the-trainer courses and other means.

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF

Protection	527
Assistance	-
Prevention	882
Cooperation with National Societies	685
General	-
Total	2,094
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	128

IMPLEMENTATION RATE

Expenditure/yearly budget	68%
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PERSONNEL

Mobile staff	4
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	12

PROTECTION

	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	3

CONTEXT

The government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (hereafter Venezuela) grappled with a deteriorating economy, characterized most notably by shortages of essential goods. Increasing violence in some neighbourhoods prompted the authorities to ramp up law enforcement operations there. Venezuela also had to deal with tensions in areas along its borders with Colombia and Guyana. These tensions along the Colombia-Venezuela boundary compounded the situation faced by communities in Venezuelan border states already hosting people who had fled the internal conflict in Colombia: the Venezuelan government imposed a state of emergency in those areas and allegedly deported 1,000 Colombians to Colombia; approximately 20,000 other Colombians returned to Colombia on their own.

Many urban districts in certain Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) continued to deal with high rates of crime and gang violence, which resulted in casualties, movement restrictions and limited access to basic services for the local population. In these countries, military personnel usually supported the police in law enforcement operations.

Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and Venezuela held national or parliamentary elections.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

The ICRC continued to support and work with the region's National Societies to help people cope with the effects of violence. It also strove to promote respect for internationally recognized policing standards and IHL among military and police forces in the countries covered and among regional organizations.

The Venezuelan Red Cross and the ICRC focused on boosting local capacities to provide adequate and unhindered health services, in line with the Safer Access Framework. They did this by conducting training sessions in life-saving care for first responders and health personnel, among them doctors from a military hospital and community members in some neighbourhoods. National Society radio spots about the Fundamental Principles and first-aid techniques supplemented these sessions. People in Venezuelan states bordering Colombia, including Colombian migrants and refugees, received first-aid training and basic health services. Psychosocial support and family-links services from the National Society helped them cope with the effects of deportations/voluntary returns.

CARICOM National Societies sought to strengthen their operational and managerial capacities with various forms of support from Movement partners. The Belizean and Jamaican National Societies began to expand their activities for building resilience among youth in violence-prone neighbourhoods; the Jamaican National Society maintained its educational support for schoolchildren. However, the Bahamas Red Cross Society made little progress in developing an action plan to provide family-links services. Regular coordination among Movement partners helped ensure effective implementation of projects.

The ICRC continued to promote respect for internationally recognized policing standards and/or IHL among military and police forces throughout the region. These forces included Venezuelan military personnel who participated in a training course on international norms applicable to law enforcement operations after

the resumption of cooperation between the Venezuelan defence ministry and the ICRC. States drew on ICRC technical support to ratify or implement IHL-related treaties; Barbados, Belize and Dominica ratified the Arms Trade Treaty. The ICRC expanded its contacts with local stakeholders and continued to discuss issues of humanitarian concern with regional/multilateral agencies. Dialogue with the Venezuelan authorities on the resumption of visits to detainees made no headway.

CIVILIANS

Networking/dialogue and monitoring of the situation helped the ICRC gain a clearer understanding of the dynamics of violence in the region. It also enabled the organization to work with local partners to address issues such as ensuring respect for health services during emergencies.

The region's National Societies continued to strengthen their ability to respond effectively to emergencies and to the needs of vulnerable people, with ICRC financial, material and technical support. National Societies concerned prepared contingency plans for dealing with outbreaks of election-related violence; these included pre-positioning emergency response teams in violence-prone areas and/or medical supplies at key branches. Venezuelan Red Cross volunteers were trained in the Safer Access Framework, and the Belizean and Jamaican National Societies developed action plans to more fully implement the framework in their operations.

Doctors from public hospitals and one military facility in Venezuela expand their surgical capacities

In Venezuela, emergency responders and health personnel became more adept at providing life-saving care through ICRC support. National Society staff learnt – during workshops – how to standardize their community-based first-aid activities; after attending a course abroad (see *Mexico City*), two National Society volunteers became better equipped to respond to large-scale emergencies.

At National Society and/or ICRC training sessions, people in urban neighbourhoods under the control of community organizations added to their knowledge of first aid, and doctors from public hospitals in four cities and one military facility developed their skills in weapon-wound management. These activities, together with radio spots (see *Actors of influence*), sought to bolster communities' emergency preparedness and to facilitate safe access for responders to the wounded/sick. With ICRC sponsorship, a representative from the national forensic services participated in a regional meeting on human-remains management.

In Venezuelan states bordering Colombia, the National Society/ICRC partnered local health authorities to help vulnerable people deal with the effects of the fighting in Colombia. Community leaders received training in first aid, and roughly 1,550 people, mainly Colombian migrants and refugees, obtained basic health care. National Society-provided psychosocial support and family-links services helped people cope with the consequences of deportations/voluntary returns (see *Context*).

Violence-affected schoolchildren in Jamaica acquire literacy, numeracy and vocational skills

The Belizean and Jamaican National Societies drew on ICRC expertise to expand their efforts to address the impact of armed violence on the youth; these efforts included facilitating access for young people to psychosocial support and sports-related opportunities. Almost 90 schoolchildren, affected by violence and lacking

access to government services, developed literacy, numeracy and vocational skills at the ICRC-supported Jamaica Red Cross School.

Movement partners continued to encourage the Bahamas Red Cross to strengthen its family-links services, especially for detained migrants; however, the National Society made little progress in developing an action plan for these activities. Officials from the Bahamian and Jamaican National Societies participated in the Movement's regional meeting on family-links services.

PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM

Detainees in Venezuela did not receive visits from the ICRC, as dialogue between the authorities and the organization on the resumption of such visits – suspended since December 2012 – made no headway.

ICRC briefings sought to clarify among the parties concerned the nature of the organization's activities in places of detention.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

The Venezuelan armed forces and the ICRC resume joint training for military personnel

Cooperation resumed between the Venezuelan defence ministry and the ICRC; this resulted in the organization of training for the armed forces, including sessions on improving medical services (see *Civilians*). During a workshop, over 60 military personnel furthered their understanding of international norms for the use of force in law enforcement operations. A consultation session with the ICRC helped the military make their doctrine more in line with these norms.

In Belize, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, the military, police, legal officials, academics and the ICRC discussed the incorporation of internationally recognized policing standards in the military/police's training/operations; these talks focused on the need to establish steering committees to facilitate the process. The Trinbagonian military agreed to draft common standard operating procedures, with a view to discussing these with their police counterparts afterwards.

At national round-tables, officers from the Guyanese military and police assessed the extent to which international human rights law and/or IHL had been incorporated in their respective operations/training. At a train-the-trainer course, 24 instructors strengthened their ability to teach their colleagues about law enforcement standards.

Senior Trinbagonian and Venezuelan military officials acquired knowledge of how to better integrate IHL into their operations during IHL courses abroad (see *International law and policy* and *Mexico City*).

ICRC participation in events organized by regional bodies, primarily the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security and the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP), endeavoured to foster awareness among Member States of the need to conduct their operations in line with law enforcement standards. The ACCP published in its annual magazine an article by the ICRC on this subject.

Three countries ratify the Arms Trade Treaty

States in the region, with help from the ICRC, took further measures to ratify or implement IHL-related treaties. Representatives from these countries learnt more about the domestic implementation of IHL during seminars abroad (see *Colombia* and *Suva*). ICRC expertise guided the drafting of a regionwide model law for implementing the Arms Trade Treaty; Barbados, Belize and Dominica ratified the treaty. The Venezuelan government announced the entry into force of a law on the Movement's emblems and another on the creation of a national IHL committee.

Venezuelan radio stations broadcast information about the Fundamental Principles and basic first aid

In Venezuela, the authorities, community/civil society organizations and the wider public learnt more about the Movement's neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian activities through various National Society/ICRC initiatives. In particular, inhabitants of violence-prone neighbourhoods, especially the youth, became more aware of the Fundamental Principles, the Health Care in Danger project and basic first-aid techniques from National Society radio spots broadcast by public and private stations. Contacts between community organizations and the National Society/ICRC enabled the latter to conduct first-aid training in some neighbourhoods (see *Civilians*).

Dialogue continued between regional/multilateral agencies, the authorities in the countries covered, and the ICRC on issues of humanitarian concern.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The region's National Societies continued to receive technical, financial and material support from Movement partners to improve their operational capacities and institutional set-up. An assessment of organizational capacities at branch level, conducted by the International Federation with ICRC support, sought to facilitate the streamlining of the National Societies' management and structure.

The support mentioned above enabled some of these National Societies to work with local actors in responding to emergencies and/or to the effects of violence in urban communities (see *Civilians*).

The Venezuelan Red Cross worked with the ICRC to design a media campaign to promote the Movement among the youth (see *Actors of influence*).

Movement partners throughout the region held coordination meetings periodically and carried out joint missions to share experiences and monitor the implementation of projects, respectively. Representatives of the National Societies of Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis attended the 32nd International Conference with ICRC sponsorship.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total		
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons				
		Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered	4	3		
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	1			
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	3			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)	2		1	
<i>including people for whom tracing requests were registered by another delegation</i>	1			