

NEPAL



ICRC/AR_2015
 ○ ICRC delegation + ICRC office ▽ ICRC-supported prosthetic/orthotic project

The ICRC initially worked in Nepal out of its regional delegation in New Delhi, opening a delegation in Kathmandu in 2001. Since the May 2006 agreement between the government and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist, which put an end to a 10-year non-international armed conflict, the ICRC has focused on: helping clarify the fate of missing persons and supporting their families; promoting full compliance with IHL; and helping improve local capacities to provide medical care for the wounded and physical rehabilitation services for those in need. It works closely with and helps the Nepal Red Cross Society strengthen its operational capacities, particularly in emergency response.

KEY RESULTS/CONSTRAINTS IN 2015

- ▶ After the earthquakes in April/May, the ICRC assisted dispersed/injured people and provided technical/material support for managing human remains, under a 2013 Movement agreement on disaster response.
- ▶ Thousands of earthquake survivors received first-aid treatment and psychosocial care from ICRC-supported/trained Nepal Red Cross Society staff/volunteers, who also offered family-links services.
- ▶ Disabled people, including earthquake victims, benefited from physical rehabilitation services and assistive devices from ICRC-supported centres, one of which became financially independent.
- ▶ Families of missing persons met some of their psychological/legal/economic needs through an ICRC project implemented with local providers. Some activities for the families were delayed after the earthquakes.
- ▶ The national IHL committee produced, with ICRC support, an IHL reference handbook for parliamentarians, civilian authorities and other policy-makers, with a view to promoting domestic IHL implementation.

EXPENDITURE IN KCHF	
Protection	1,031
Assistance	1,999
Prevention	487
Cooperation with National Societies	407
General	51
Total	3,975
<i>Of which: Overheads</i>	242

IMPLEMENTATION RATE	
Expenditure/yearly budget	122%

PERSONNEL	
Mobile staff	5
Resident staff (daily workers not included)	55

YEARLY RESULTS

Level of achievement of ICRC yearly objectives/plans of action

MEDIUM

PROTECTION	Total
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	58
RCMs distributed	58
Phone calls facilitated between family members	243
People located (tracing cases closed positively)	11
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)	
Restoring family links	
RCMs collected	97
RCMs distributed	59

ASSISTANCE	2015 Targets (up to)	Achieved
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)		
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)		
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	6,444
Cash	Beneficiaries	2,022
WOUNDED AND SICK		
Hospitals		
Hospitals supported	Structures	12
Physical rehabilitation		
Projects supported	Structures	2
Patients receiving services	Patients	1,300

CONTEXT

Powerful earthquakes struck the central region of Nepal, including the capital city of Kathmandu and several mountainous areas, in April and May. An estimated 8 million people were affected; many of them lost their homes. Nearly 9,000 people were reported dead, and 22,300 said to be injured; some 150 people remained unaccounted for.

Political protests over constitutional issues took place throughout the year. After a new constitution was promulgated in September, more than 50 people were killed in incidents of violence in the south. Ambulances were attacked. In the last quarter of the year, protests disrupted the delivery of essential supplies to some areas in the south, causing shortages.

The government passed an act establishing separate commissions to address “truth and reconciliation” and disappearances in relation to the past conflict, which ended in 2006. In response to complaints filed by some groups of conflict victims, the act’s provision on general amnesty was declared null by the Supreme Court. The commissions established internal rules and procedures despite various concerns raised by victims’ groups, human-rights associations and other stakeholders. At the end of 2015, the rules and procedures had not been endorsed by the government, and the commissions had yet to begin their work.

Mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) from the past conflict, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) linked to criminality, continued to endanger lives.

ICRC ACTION AND RESULTS

Together with the Nepal Red Cross Society, the ICRC responded to emergency needs after the earthquakes in April and May. It continued its efforts to help ascertain the fate of persons missing in relation to the past conflict and to assist their families, but these and other planned activities were delayed as the delegation prioritized emergency response.

Under a 2013 Movement agreement on disaster response, the ICRC supported the Nepalese Red Cross and coordinated with the International Federation in addressing earthquake-related needs within its areas of expertise. The National Society drew on ICRC support to provide family-links services and psychosocial care to thousands of survivors. The Nepalese Red Cross, together with military/police units and the Department of Forensic Medicine (DFM), received guidance from ICRC experts and material support to ensure the proper management of human remains. Two ICRC family-links/forensics specialists were assigned to an International Federation assessment/coordination team for three months. Besides these activities, which took place within the context of the Movement’s response, the ICRC aided vulnerable detainees and assessed the state of heavily damaged jails; afterwards, it made recommendations to the authorities and assisted in the renovation of one prison.

The ICRC worked closely with trained National Society volunteers to update information on missing persons and, where appropriate, submit cases to the parties to the past conflict, with a view to clarifying these persons’ fate/whereabouts. The ICRC maintained its dialogue about the issue with the authorities and established contact with the newly formed Commission on Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons.

The relatives of missing persons continued to receive psychosocial/legal/economic support through a project implemented by the National Society, a local NGO and the ICRC. National Society staff/volunteers served as points of contact with the families, keeping them informed of developments and helping them obtain assistance, including financial support from the government.

The ICRC kept up its efforts to help local actors develop their capacities in emergency preparedness/response. It facilitated National Society-led workshops at which Armed Police Force (APF) officers advanced their skills in first-aid and human remains management. The APF, together with the National Society, organized first-aid training for its personnel.

People with disabilities, including casualties of mines/ERW/IEDs, and earthquake victims, received treatment and assistive devices at two physical rehabilitation centres supported by the ICRC. One of the centres became financially independent.

The national IHL committee, in coordination with the National Society and the ICRC, produced an IHL handbook for parliamentarians, civilian authorities and other policy-makers, with a view to promoting domestic implementation of IHL. The ICRC maintained dialogue with the Nepalese armed/security forces on incorporating IHL and other applicable norms in their doctrine, training and operations. The Nepalese authorities learnt more about IHL and related norms at various events/meetings. Media coverage of National Society/ICRC activities helped raise public awareness of humanitarian issues and the Movement’s work, including its response to the earthquakes.

The Nepalese Red Cross continued, with ICRC support, to boost its operational capacities – notably, in helping detainees and disaster victims restore/maintain family links – and to pursue organizational development.

CIVILIANS

Earthquake survivors reconnect with their relatives and receive psychosocial support

The earthquakes severely affected 14 out of the country’s 75 districts. Communication networks resumed operations shortly after the earthquakes struck; nonetheless, people used “safe and well” messages, phone calls and other Nepalese Red Cross/ICRC services to contact their relatives, including those abroad. Embassies were informed of the situation of their detained nationals who had survived the earthquakes or had been reported missing to the National Society. The police were provided with the list of missing persons, enabling them to join the search for these people.

Hundreds of earthquake survivors registered themselves as alive, and thousands of people reported their relatives as missing, on the ICRC’s family-links website (familylinks.icrc.org), which was made available in English and Nepalese. The National Society, with ICRC support, worked on cases of missing persons collected through the family-links website or from families in earthquake-affected areas. With the ICRC’s help, the National Society launched the Family-links Answers case-management system, which added to its capacities in restoring family links. The demand for family-links services in connection with the earthquakes declined after the movement of people had stabilized and the collection of human remains had begun.

In the five districts most heavily affected, 3,817 earthquake survivors, including some 440 children, received psychosocial support from ICRC-trained National Society staff/volunteers, some of whom benefited from such services themselves.

Around 4,000 detainees in 14 damaged prisons benefited from tarpaulins and hygiene items distributed through the National Society, which also received similar materials (for some 2,000 people) to replenish its stocks. Conditions in seven heavily damaged jails were assessed in coordination with the Department of Prison Management. Afterwards, the authorities received recommendations and proposals for ICRC assistance; they requested support for renovating one of the prisons. At year's end, work on that prison was in progress.

Cooperation among Movement partners helped ensure the proper management of human remains after the earthquakes. The National Society, military/police units and the DFM received over 1,000 body bags and other supplies, facilitating their collection of human remains; many of the responders had attended ICRC-supported training sessions in the past.

The DFM bolstered its services with ICRC technical/material support, which included computers equipped with ICRC ante/post-mortem data-management software, and training in the use of this software. The DFM identified 365 of the 430 sets of human remains it received after the earthquakes and handed them over to the families. Refrigeration facilities were installed, increasing the DFM morgue's storage capacity.

Local experts advanced their skills in forensic pathology and other technical areas with help from ICRC-hired advisers. Two specialists learnt more about managing human remains in disasters through a workshop abroad.

Some families receive information on the fate of missing relatives

Families were still seeking 1,338 relatives missing in connection with the past conflict. National Society/ICRC teams continued to collect/verify information on missing persons from/with their families and to cross-check this against publicly available records. Individual cases were submitted to the parties to the past conflict; an updated list of missing persons was published on the ICRC's family-links website. Meetings with other stakeholders often led to information on the location of possible gravesites. Through this process, the fates of four people were established, and one family visited the spot where their missing relative was said to be buried. National Society staff/volunteers visited the families to inform them of developments and to help them obtain government benefits (see below).

Activities for families of missing persons were delayed by the earthquakes and, in the south, by protests.

Relatives of missing persons address their psychosocial and other needs

Some 600 families (4,310 people) in 27 districts, whose relatives were missing, received assistance for meeting their psychosocial/legal/economic needs through a comprehensive project run by the ICRC, with the National Society and a local NGO, both of which received technical/financial assistance. Around 600 people drew on peer support during meetings of people with missing relatives; 151 women organized themselves into new peer groups. Over 180

people consulted with trained counsellors. Six mentally ill people received free consultations/treatment after being referred to government hospitals. Some 1,170 people attended inaugurations for memorials, which brought them some comfort. At training sessions, 158 adolescents learnt how to cope with the absence of family members. Around 620 families (3,560 people) boosted their livelihoods using cash grants. During interviews, beneficiaries confirmed that the project had had a positive effect on their personal welfare and on community life.

At sessions/courses, counsellors and other staff/volunteers – including some relatives of missing persons – strengthened their ability to provide support to the families. Several counsellors/volunteers involved in the project provided psychosocial care to earthquake survivors. The implementation of the project was delayed in some areas as a result of the earthquakes.

An assessment carried out in two districts found unaddressed economic and other needs among people who had suffered sexual violence during the past conflict.

Government bodies receive support for assisting the families of missing persons

With the National Society/ICRC's help, 1,240 of the 1,338 families registered by the ICRC received financial support under the government's interim relief programme. The National Society/ICRC followed up on the applications of 102 families who had not yet received such support.

Dialogue with the authorities focused on the importance of developing frameworks for exhumations and ensuring that the needs of the families of all categories of people missing from the past conflict were covered by the newly formed Commission on Investigation of Enforced Disappeared Persons. The ICRC provided recommendations for establishing mechanisms to handle missing-persons cases in relation to armed conflicts. The ICRC encouraged the commission to ensure, *inter alia*, that information about missing persons was centralized and that families had easy access to the commission and were kept abreast of developments in the search for their relatives. With ICRC assistance, a government archivist attended a training course, and two families registered requests for the exhumation of their relatives' remains.

The ICRC conducted a study of the legal/administrative issues faced by families of the missing. The study's findings and recommendations were shared with the authorities.

Cooperation with the Nepal Society of Families of the Disappeared and Missing (NEFAD) continued. NEFAD representatives met with families of the missing to discuss the families' needs, government procedures related to the issue of missing persons, NEFAD's advocacy strategy, local initiatives/challenges, and the findings of the ICRC study (see above).

Refugees/detainees reconnect with their relatives

Besides earthquake victims, people who were separated from their relatives or had difficulty communicating with them benefited from National Society/ICRC family-links services. In 25 prisons, foreign detainees and others who had no contact with their relatives availed themselves of National Society services. Bhutanese refugees visited relatives detained in Bhutan (see *New Delhi*) with National Society/ICRC help. Families in Nepal talked to relatives detained in Kuwait via ICRC-organized video calls.

Nepalese migrants leaving the country learnt about Movement family-links services through leaflets distributed at the Kathmandu airport by the National Society, in coordination with the Department of Foreign Employment.

National Society volunteers strengthened their ability to conduct family-links activities, particularly during disasters and for detainees, at training sessions.

WOUNDED AND SICK

Injured people receive treatment

Through a jingle broadcast over local radio stations by the Nepalese Red Cross/ICRC, people became more aware of the need to give ambulances free passage during protests.

Thousands of people wounded during disasters/accidents/incidents of violence received first aid from National Society teams, made up of volunteers trained by the ICRC as part of an ongoing partnership to boost the National Society's capacities in emergency preparedness/response. Some 8,700 people from 42 districts, including around 6,100 earthquake survivors, were treated by these teams. People with serious injuries received care at 12 hospitals that the ICRC provided with medical supplies; some of the doctors who treated them drew on what they had learnt at ICRC courses.

Through ICRC courses, 23 doctors from 20 hospitals strengthened their ability to manage mass casualties, and 60 medical interns learnt more about trauma management.

Twenty-one injured persons who had become separated from relatives were given assistance to return home.

APF officers become first-aid instructors

The APF reinforced its capacities in first aid and managing human remains by organizing, with the National Society, six courses for 144 personnel. Twenty-four senior officers developed their skills in first-aid instruction and human remains management at workshops conducted by ICRC-supported National Society trainers.

Some local instructors in emergency-room trauma management added to their knowledge of war surgery and mass-casualty management at courses abroad. Several planned courses with Kathmandu University Hospital instructors had to be cancelled after the earthquakes.

Disabled people regain/improve their mobility

A total of 2,196 disabled people, including mine/ERW/IED victims, improved their mobility with help from physical rehabilitation services at the ICRC-supported Green Pastures Hospital and Yerahity National Rehabilitation Centre. Hundreds of patients were provided with assistive devices; 257 patients received free/subsidized services.

The centres continued to receive material/technical assistance for improving the management/provision of their services; Green Pastures Hospital became financially independent. On the basis of an assessment, the ICRC increased its support for the two centres, to ensure the availability of services for earthquake survivors; patients were helped to travel to the centres, in coordination with the National Society.

To meet emergency needs following the earthquakes, crutches and walking sticks were donated to hospitals and rehabilitation

centres treating injured people. During a four-day outreach camp in Butwal, 123 disabled people – who had benefited from physical rehabilitation services at the two ICRC-supported centres – received follow-up care.

ACTORS OF INFLUENCE

National IHL committee produces IHL reference handbook

Dialogue and cooperation between the authorities and the ICRC continued: humanitarian issues remained the focus, particularly the needs of the families of missing persons (see *Civilians*) and advancing domestic IHL implementation.

The national IHL committee, in coordination with the Nepalese Red Cross and the ICRC, produced a reference handbook on IHL implementation for parliamentarians, civilian authorities and other policy-makers. A draft bill for implementing the 1949 Geneva Conventions – endorsed by the national IHL committee in 2014 – was under review by the defence ministry. With the ICRC's guidance, the National Society continued to work on a draft law to strengthen its legal status.

Representatives of the government, civil society and international organizations learnt about recent developments in IHL and related challenges at an ICRC presentation. The authorities and other stakeholders kept abreast of such developments by attending regional/international ICRC events, such as the annual South Asia Teaching Sessions on IHL (see *New Delhi* and *Pakistan*). A home ministry official attended an experts' meeting on the Strengthening IHL process in Switzerland; other government officials were brought up to date on this process during meetings/briefings with the ICRC. A party to the past conflict contributed to the ICRC's worldwide consultations on the detention practices of armed groups.

Dialogue with the secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, based in Nepal, continued.

Police and military personnel add to their knowledge of IHL/other norms

Some 50 police/APF officers learnt more about IHL and internationally recognized standards on the use of force at two courses, organized under the rubric of Nepal Police/APF cooperation with the ICRC, in incorporating these norms in their doctrine, training and operations. Other personnel learnt more about these subjects, and the ICRC's mandate/activities, during dissemination/training sessions (see *Wounded and sick*). Some 120 APF peacekeepers attended ICRC presentations during their predeployment briefings.

Military officers learnt about contemporary IHL challenges through ICRC presentations/briefings. Twenty-two officers developed their IHL teaching ability through an advanced course. One officer attended a regional seminar on peacekeeping and IHL (see *New Delhi*). A senior military officer participated in a workshop on the rules governing military operations (see *International law and policy*).

Military/police/APF representatives participated in a National Society course in disaster response (see *Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*).

The general public learns about Movement activities through the media

University students added to their knowledge of IHL and the ICRC's mandate/activities through presentations and multimedia

materials donated to their libraries. With ICRC support, a law school in Kathmandu began to publish an academic journal on IHL. Law students tested/enriched their knowledge of IHL at national/regional moot court competitions. Two law instructors benefited from attendance at advanced programmes in IHL in India and Switzerland.

Media coverage of National Society/ICRC activities – based on ICRC press releases and other materials – helped raise awareness among the general public of humanitarian principles and the Movement’s work. Following the earthquakes, news releases and other forms of public communication drew attention to the Movement’s response, particularly its work to restore family links, provide psychosocial care and promote the proper management of human remains. Messages on these subjects were broadcast on the National Society’s radio programme and elsewhere on the radio.

The media also gave coverage to the plight of families of the missing and the accompaniment programme, and to the disruption of health-care services caused by attacks on ambulances during protests in the south. Movement partners issued a joint statement calling for the protection of health-care personnel/facilities and for free passage for ambulances, and another on the humanitarian impact of the shortage of essential supplies after the protests.

RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT

The Nepalese Red Cross leads the Movement’s response to the earthquake

With support from the International Federation, some 30 other National Societies and the ICRC, the Nepalese Red Cross provided – through its countrywide network of volunteers – shelter, water, hygiene items, family-links services, psychosocial care and other aid to thousands of earthquake survivors (see *Civilians*). It pursued these activities despite itself being affected by the earthquakes: three volunteers were killed, and blood banks, offices and other facilities sustained damage.

Movement partners in Nepal coordinated their response on the basis of an agreement signed in 2013, reinforced by a joint statement signed after the April earthquake. Two ICRC family-links/forensic specialists were assigned to an International Federation assessment/coordination team for three months.

Nepalese Red Cross personnel learnt more about the Safer Access Framework through an ICRC-supported workshop. Volunteers attended a disaster-response course with military, police and APP personnel (see *Actors of influence*).

The National Society continued to strive to strengthen its legal status (see *Actors of influence*) and its organizational development, in line with initiatives begun in 2012.

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: PROTECTION		Total			
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)					
Red Cross messages (RCMs)			UAMs/SC*		
RCMs collected		58			
RCMs distributed		58			
Phone calls facilitated between family members		243			
Names published in the media		1,343			
Names published on the ICRC family-links website		3,956			
Tracing requests, including cases of missing persons			Women	Girls	Boys
People for whom a tracing request was newly registered		1	1		
People located (tracing cases closed positively)		11			
Tracing cases still being handled at the end of the reporting period (people)		1,340	108	34	109
Documents					
People to whom travel documents were issued		89			
PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR FREEDOM (All categories/all statuses)					
Restoring family links					
RCMs collected		97			
RCMs distributed		59			

*Unaccompanied minors/separated children

MAIN FIGURES AND INDICATORS: ASSISTANCE		Total	Women	Children
CIVILIANS (residents, IDPs, returnees, etc.)				
Economic security (in some cases provided within a protection or cooperation programme)				
Essential household items	Beneficiaries	6,444	21%	
Productive inputs	Beneficiaries	3,588	34%	35%
WOUNDED AND SICK				
Hospitals				
Hospitals supported	Structures	12		
First aid				
First-aid posts supported	Structures	4		
	<i>of which provided data</i>	4		
Wounded patients treated	Patients	8,722		
Physical rehabilitation				
Projects supported	Structures	2		
Patients receiving services	Patients	2,196	713	134
New patients fitted with prostheses	Patients	78	22	10
Prostheses delivered	Units	117	32	16
	<i>of which for victims of mines or explosive remnants of war</i>	4		
New patients fitted with orthoses	Patients	154	35	36
Orthoses delivered	Units	205	44	53
Patients receiving physiotherapy	Patients	799	329	25
Crutches delivered	Units	434		
Wheelchairs delivered	Units	130		