



**WORKING TOWARDS CLOSER, PARTICIPATORY AND SUSTAINABLE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR THOSE
MOST AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE**

**ANNUAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES IN 2023 AND OUTLOOK FOR 2024
ICRC Caracas Regional Delegation**

The ICRC Caracas Regional Delegation covers Venezuela, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

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CONTENTS

Venezuela, a resilient country still facing challenges	4
Alleviating suffering and protecting lives: the tireless work of the ICRC	6
Providing a concerted, efficient and rapid humanitarian response together with the Venezuelan Red Cross	8
Reducing the human cost of violence: promoting IHL and humanitarian principles	9
Boosting self-sustainability to improve the livelihoods of violence-affected communities	10
Strengthening capacities to care for the wounded	12
Our humanitarian action in 2023 / Infographic	14
Restoring and maintaining safe water supplies, today and tomorrow	16
Humanity behind bars: The ICRC's commitment to dignified treatment of people deprived of their liberty	17
Separated families and missing persons: families should be able to stay united.....	18
By taking caring of those who are no longer with us, we honour their memory and support their loved ones	19
Environmental mitigation, adaptation and awareness-raising: for better prepared communities	21
2024: Committed to our core humanitarian mandate	23
Map. Areas of responsibility and Priority Zones	24

VENEZUELA, A RESILIENT COUNTRY STILL FACING CHALLENGES

I have headed the ICRC Caracas Regional Delegation for the past four years, leading our activities to alleviate the suffering of those most affected by armed violence in the country.

These words may come easily, but the 200 weeks at the head of the ICRC delegation have been hard work. In addition to the very particular context of Venezuela come the challenges inherent to all humanitarian action. Looking back today, however, I can say with confidence that, while there is still work to be done, we have strengthened our humanitarian action in Venezuela and helped to boost the well-being and protection of those most vulnerable.

Numbers can lack substance if they are not accompanied by a story, by a face. **In 2023, over 649,982 people, who were directly or indirectly affected by armed violence, benefited from ICRC action.** What does this mean? It means that those who received our help will be able to move forward and continue to grow stronger, that the violence will not rob them of what is rightly theirs: their dignity, their hope and their ability to pull through despite the obstacles.

Thanks to the work of ICRC teams in the Capital District and the states of Miranda, Aragua, Bolívar, Apure, Táchira and Zulia, in 2023 **we supported 19 structures, repairing and upgrading infrastructure, restoring basic services** and exchanging experiences with local partners, mainly in the fields of health, forensics and prison management. As a result of our action, lives were saved and families were reunited.

But the people living in these places still face many challenges. **It is our duty, together with the authorities and all players in society, to continue working together to reduce the impact of armed violence on their daily lives.**

In some contexts, people who have been deprived of their liberty are forgotten, sometimes condemned by society and seen as beyond redemption. They bear a heavy load. The ICRC tries to lighten this load for them. Through our visits to prisons in Venezuela, **we helped nearly 1,500 detainees to keep in contact with their families. We provided 638 custodial staff with training on international standards for the protection of people deprived of their liberty.** We also produced – together with representatives of the justice system, detainees and their families – posters containing basic information on the different stages of criminal proceedings. This was an important initiative that supports the work already done by the judicial bodies, and it will help both detainees and their families to better understand the legal processes they are facing.

I cannot fail to mention two projects that have transformed the lives of the participants, who have been the true protagonists and driving forces behind the action. The first is the urban gardens project in Cota 905, a part of Caracas scarred by violence. Here, nearly 150 families reconnected with planting as a sustainable and supportive element in their lives.

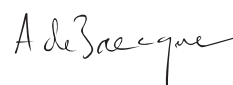
The other project is located on the Arauca axis, in Apure State, on the border with Colombia. Here we supported more than 100 cocoa farmers who had been badly affected by the violence in 2021 and 2022. Today we can safely say that the chocolate they produce bears the seal of quality, hard work and responsibility.

In my four years as head of delegation, we have strengthened our relations with the Venezuelan Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and thus generate the necessary trust to resume our work together, based on a complementary effort geared towards the fundamental themes of the Movement in Venezuela. There are multiple examples of synergy that we have had in our daily work, ranging from coordinating a meeting to refine details in our response to guaranteeing joint and complementary action in situations of natural disasters, in which every second and every volunteer is infinitely valuable to support for the affected Venezuelan population.

In 2024, the ICRC delegation in Venezuela will take on new responsibilities. It will cover the Caribbean region, with special attention to Cuba and Dominican Republic; we will also serve the CARICOM member states, except Haiti, and place special emphasis on Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. This is sure to bring new experiences and challenges.

Throughout these years, I been in daily contact with that side of Venezuelans that helps make the road smoother: when they give you a cup of coffee “that tastes like the Caribbean” and “recharges your batteries”. Many people here are facing difficult situations, yet they still find it in themselves to see the good side of life. I am inspired by their courage in the face of adversity. **In 2024, the ICRC will continue to work tirelessly so they can live without fear, so they can access better opportunities and services – always hand in hand with the communities, who are the heart of our action.**

I leave Venezuela with the hope of returning, either as a visitor grateful for my time here, or once more as a member of the ICRC office in the country. I have learned that, here, there are always people ready to give you a hug; that you can greet someone with the words: “Épale, chamo!”. But now the time has come to say farewell, or rather: “Hasta pronto, hermanos”.



Arnaud de Baecque
Head of delegation



K. Garzmán / ICRC

First-aid course in the Pawipa community in Maripa, Bolívar State

ALLEVIATING SUFFERING AND PROTECTING LIVES: THE TIRELESS WORK OF THE ICRC

As long as armed conflict and violence remain a means of resolving controversies and disputes, independent organizations such as the ICRC will be needed to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to the people affected. In all cases, those not taking part in the violence suffer its devastating consequences: displacement, physical and mental health problems, loss of livelihoods, poor access to essential services, deprivation of liberty, broken family ties, and more.

In Venezuela, the ICRC's activities are aimed at protecting the lives and dignity of people affected by armed violence in the prioritized areas of the states of Zulia, Apure, Táchira, Bolívar, Aragua, Miranda and Amazonas and the Capital District. To do so, the ICRC follows an integrated approach based on four fields of action, which are carried out in close conjunction: protection, assistance, cooperation and prevention.

Confidential, bilateral dialogue with all those who bear weapons is of vital importance in the ICRC's work to protect people affected by violence. This involves establishing direct and discreet communication with state and non-state armed players, in an effort to build bridges of trust and understanding. Through such dialogue, we encourage the authorities and all weapon bearers to fulfil their obligations under the rules protecting people affected by violence.

However, armed players and the authorities are not the only ones with whom the ICRC engages in confidential dialogue. It is the communities, which are made up of

a diversity of people in different situations of vulnerability, who have the power to let us know and understand their most urgent needs and concerns. It is through mutual understanding and the search for joint solutions that significant progress can be made in protecting the most vulnerable. **In 2023, the ICRC thus carried out 17 community consultations, with the participation of 241 people, in Bolívar, Miranda, Apure and Aragua. Thanks to fora such as these, the ICRC can design activities that take proper account of the communities, in order to offer an appropriate, timely and sustainable humanitarian response** – as seen in the 14 processes with a community-based protection approach that are currently under way and that will continue throughout 2024. They follow an integrated people-centred protection approach to prevent and respond to the consequences of violence in Venezuela.

KEEPING SAFE DURING ARMED CLASHES

Children, teenagers, young people and adults going about their daily lives in the community, schools and health centres are affected without distinction when armed clashes and/or other situations of violence occur. Bewildered and fearful, they find themselves in the line of fire without knowing clearly how best to protect themselves in these unexpected situations.

To help them reduce some of the risks, **13 safe behaviour training sessions for facilitators, 10 community-awareness sessions and five training sessions for priority Venezuelan Red Cross structures were carried out in 2023. A total of 497 participants thus learned the key recommendations for keeping safe.** A community that is prepared is better able to reduce the latent risks it faces with every outbreak of violence.



Fear has become something we can control and not something that controls us. At the safe behaviour workshops, we learned how to recognize security signs and areas.

Natacha Moreno,
a participant at the safe behaviour workshops in José Félix Ribas, Petare.

PROVIDING A CONCERTED, EFFICIENT AND RAPID HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TOGETHER WITH THE VENEZUELAN RED CROSS

The ICRC coordinates its operational activities with the Venezuelan Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in order to provide an efficient and complementary humanitarian response.

In Venezuela, our cooperation encompasses several joint activities, for instance building the resilience of vulnerable communities, delivering first-aid training and health care and restoring family links, thereby enabling us to broaden our impact. The ICRC also works with the Venezuelan Red Cross to strengthen and expand its operational response capacity, training and updating volunteers in different fields and programmes that respond to urgent humanitarian needs. **In 2023, 372 volunteers were trained in these areas.** All this would not be possible without the volunteers, as it is their knowledge of the communities, who welcome them with open arms, that allows the ICRC to better understand the needs and support them in providing a more effective humanitarian response.

Ensuring acceptance of and access by the Red Cross in Venezuela is a priority for the ICRC, which is why advising and training members of the Venezuelan Red Cross in safer access, humanitarian principles, legal basis and operational risk management was a priority in 2023 and will be so even more in 2024.

Our goal is to help strengthen the sustainable impact of the Movement in Venezuela. The ICRC delegation will cooperate with and support the Venezuelan Red Cross – together with the International Federation and other Movement partners – in its restructuring process in order to ensure operational continuity, based on a renewal of the National Society’s legal basis and the election of new leadership, all within the framework of the Fundamental Principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence.

In the Caribbean, the ICRC will maintain dialogue with all the National Societies in the region, placing focus on those of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago, through training on and the promotion of international humanitarian law (IHL), the protection of family links and coordination with Movement partners.

First-aid workshop for young people in Petare, Miranda State





Workshop on the use of force, Puerto Ordáz, Bolívar State

REDUCING THE HUMAN COST OF VIOLENCE: PROMOTING IHL AND HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The ICRC pursues a dialogue with weapon bearers to ensure that they both know and apply in their operations the rules of IHL, international human rights law and international standards on the use of force, which have been widely incorporated into domestic law, and that they facilitate humanitarian work.

All bearers of weapons must be aware of the serious consequences of the use of force. The ICRC therefore conducts a dialogue with all weapon bearers, state and non-state, as a fundamental part of its mission in Venezuela, which is to provide protection and assistance to people affected by violence. Thus, in 2023, we organized and took part in high-level meetings with civil, police and military authorities, to discuss issues related to the implementation of IHL and international human rights law and to strengthen their understanding of the ICRC's work on behalf of people affected by violence.

In Venezuela, the ICRC also supported the organization of 30 training sessions, discussions, round tables and workshops to increase knowledge and awareness of the progressive and differentiated use of force, for a total of 1,350 officers from the armed forces and various police and investigative units.

The ICRC furthermore promotes the teaching of humanitarian principles in educational settings, to help create an environment conducive to respect for the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. We focus in particular on the teaching of IHL in universities, to reach out to future decision-makers and opinion leaders. **In 2023, two awareness-raising activities were held in universities, as was a workshop on IHL and the use of force for staff of the Ombudsman's Office.**

Reaffirming its role as a neutral intermediary and guardian of IHL, in 2024 the ICRC in Venezuela and the Caribbean will continue to promote the importance of IHL and the humanitarian principles that form part of the international legal framework even in times of peace.

BOOSTING SELF-SUSTAINABILITY TO IMPROVE THE LIVELIHOODS OF VIOLENCE-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

Living in areas affected by armed violence has a cross-cutting impact on people's economies – on their livelihoods, how they work and how they generate income to support themselves. In the countryside, people are forced to leave their homes, lose the tools of their trade and have problems moving around. In Caracas, they have difficulty accessing employment; they may be discriminated against for living in an area affected by violence, and are often unable to get to work when violence breaks out.

The ICRC runs economic security projects to support people whose livelihoods have been affected by violence. It does so mainly by providing technical and specialized training, essential supplies, work equipment and tools.

In 2023, we supported 149 families in Cota 905, Caracas, through an agricultural production project. The participants received technical training on setting up a vegetable garden, ensuring water hygiene, producing organic fertilizer and other skills necessary for planting. They were also given seeds, work tools, water tanks, fertilizer, etc.

Through this project, one hectare of land was planted in the neighbourhood. On the community's initiative, eight improvised rubbish dumps were cleared and the land made suitable for planting. First steps were also taken to set up a community agricultural school. Most importantly, now all the participants and other residents in the neighbourhood say that they feel empowered to carry out a self-sustaining project, which helps strengthen their livelihoods by giving them a source of food both for personal consumption and a small income from sales.

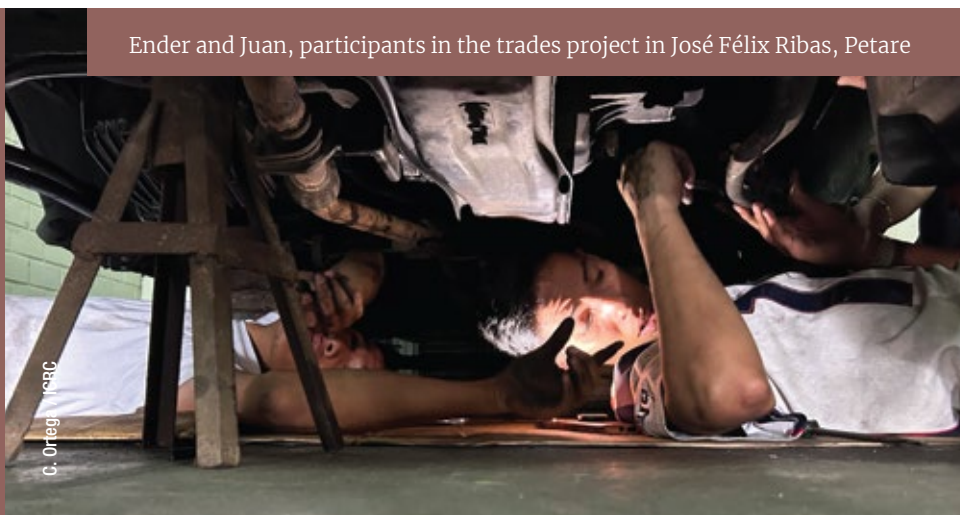
In Petare, 100 young people from zone 6 José Félix Ribas neighbourhood received training in trades, emotion management, leadership and life projects, prompting 41 of them to start conceptualizing their business ideas. These 41 young people then received more specialized guidance in entrepreneurship, as well as basic equipment and seed capital.

In Magdaleno, Aragua State, 84 people received training in entrepreneurship and soft skills (related to critical thinking, leadership, resilience or change



Find out more about the experience of these young people

Ender and Juan, participants in the trades project in José Félix Ribas, Petare



C. Orteg / ICRC

management, among others), as well as donations of essential equipment to strengthen their small businesses.

On the Arauca axis, Apure State, we ran a project for 80 cocoa producers who had had to abandon their plantations as a result of violence. They all took part in specialized training, where they learned more about the quality of their product, the richness of the soil they had worked all their lives and options for expanding the sale of cocoa and its derivatives.

This project helped to boost their production, supply and, on a smaller scale, marketing. 64 of these producers also received work tools and financial support to build structures to improve the post-harvest process.

In Tumeremo and Maripa (Bolívar State), 35 and 88 families respectively, who had been affected by armed violence, were supported in strengthening their livelihoods, mainly in agriculture. They received training in agricultural production, as well as equipment and supplies.

The ICRC's goal in these projects was to build and strengthen the capacity of the communities so that they can self-manage their livelihoods in the long term. This multidisciplinary work often involved local and national partners who enriched these interventions with knowledge and experience.

In this video, farmers from Tumeremo talk about what they have learned



Visit to the urban gardens in La Cota 905, Caracas

Here is how the students have made use of the simulation room



STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES TO CARE FOR THE WOUNDED

Wounded and polytraumatized patients are one of the most visible consequences of armed violence. Caring for them requires optimal health structures, supplies, essential medical equipment and, without a doubt, enhanced capacities among health personnel. All these resources working in synergy ensure that patients receive better treatment.

With its expertise in carrying out health programmes in emergency conditions, the ICRC worked throughout the year to help alleviate the suffering of the wounded. It did so in coordination with the relevant health authorities and health staff who, each time they are on duty, do their utmost to treat those in need of urgent care.

ICRC support in Venezuela includes: refurbishing infrastructure and water and electricity services in health centres, especially in emergency care, triage and polytrauma wards; strengthening the technical and specialized capacities of staff; providing some basic supplies; and repairing or delivering medical equipment.

In 2023, simulation rooms were equipped and opened at the Teaching Module of the University of Carabobo, Aragua branch, and the University of Los Andes. Now, health students will be able to get hands-on training, especially in treating patients who have been wounded or polytraumatized as a result of armed violence.

Likewise, on the premise that mental health is as important as physical health, the **ICRC gave 188 health professionals and Venezuelan Red Cross volunteers in La Vela (Falcón) and San Félix and El Callao (Bolívar) tools for providing mental health care and basic psychosocial support**, as a first response to the needs of patients suffering as a result of armed violence. It also worked directly with communities affected by violence to strengthen their strategies to cope with the impact on their mental well-being.

In 2023, the ICRC handed over a trauma-shock room to Miguel Pérez Carreño Hospital (Caracas), refurbished infrastructure and installed solar panels at El Choco (Bolívar) and El Cruce (Zulia) outpatient clinics, delivered medical equipment to Domingo Luciani Hospital (Caracas), equipped a burn patients' ward at Maracay Central Hospital, and gave an electric generator to Maracaibo University Hospital, among other activities.

Over the past 12 months, the ICRC strengthened the capacities and self-management of health staff through **22 specialized training sessions**. These included a Basic Emergency Care course, Emergency Room Trauma Course and first-aid training with the support of the Venezuelan Red Cross, with which **337 health professionals were trained**.

“ We could never do practical work like this before. This room creates an environment where we can work as doctors, which is what we are training to do. ”

Manuele Sánchez,
student user of the simulation room at the
University of Carabobo,
Teaching Module, Aragua branch.



Simulation room at the Teaching Module of the University of Carabobo, Aragua branch

IN 2023, OUR HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN VENEZUELA BENEFIED MORE THAN



649,982*

people, directly or indirectly affected by armed violence in the states of Distrito Capital, Miranda, Aragua, Bolívar, Apure, Táchira and Zulia*, benefited from our humanitarian activities in Venezuela.



19



facilities, including hospitals, primary health centres, schools, forensic centres, prisons, among others, were supported to improve their infrastructure and restore essential services.

109



people received individual financial assistance to mitigate the direct impact of violence on their lives.

225,000



people in San Félix, Bolívar State, benefited from the installation of a community water pump.

32,940



hygiene kits were distributed to 12,836 people deprived of their liberty in 12 detention facilities.

28,092



nutritional and micronutrient supplements were provided to priority detention facilities.

730



health workers were trained in the treatment of advanced trauma patients, basic emergency care, and other areas.

A. Sáenz / ICRC

A. Sáenz / ICRC

C. Ortega / ICRC

C. Ortega / ICRC



21

forensic services located in different states of the country were supported regularly with supplies, personal protective gear and equipment needed for their daily work (a total of 887,939 items were donated).



E.Vivas / ICRC



533

people, including residents of the communities and staff from hospitals, outpatient clinics and CRV sections, took part in 529 psychological support sessions.



E.Vivas / ICRC



C.Martin / ICRC



8,392

connectivity services were provided to separated families.



K.Guzmán / ICRC



47

Red Cross messages were collected and 46 distributed to people deprived of their liberty in 12 detention facilities.



C.Martin / ICRC



K.Guzmán / ICRC



21

branches and subcommittees of the Venezuelan Red Cross received support to strengthen their capacity for humanitarian action, their security and the well-being of their volunteers.



117

Venezuelan Red Cross volunteers received 56 trainings and learned how to behave safely during armed confrontations.



22

Red Cross messages were collected and 14 distributed, to restore or maintain family links.

*These figures illustrate the efforts of our teams to alleviate the suffering of the most vulnerable people, often in conjunction with the Venezuelan Red Cross.

RESTORING AND MAINTAINING SAFE WATER SUPPLIES, TODAY AND TOMORROW

Across the country, thousands of people still lack access to clean drinking water and proper sanitation. This has serious consequences for public health as it increases the risk of disease, as well as negatively impacting education and the local economy. Access to water and other essential resources, such as electricity and health and forensic services, is even more complicated in areas affected by armed violence.

Throughout 2023, the ICRC worked in different communities in La Fría in Táchira, Ciudad Sucre in Alto Apure, Puerto Páez in Bajo Apure, and San Félix and El Choco in Bolívar through an inclusive approach, together with the people concerned, public institutions and water boards, **to improve access to water for more than 244,780 people who had not had safe water in their homes for years.**

These initiatives also seek to promote community and institutional participation and strengthen local capacities to effectively address the challenges faced. Achieving these results involved months of hard work to refurbish infrastructure, repair electrical installations, repair buildings and recover disused wells, as well as the provision of essential equipment and technical support to ensure that water catchment, supply and distribution systems function properly. Multiple technical training sessions were also held for maintenance and safety teams to enable them to operate the facilities correctly, guarantee water quality and prevent supply cuts.

In 2024, the ICRC will continue working in cooperation with the authorities and institutions in charge, training professional groups and communities to maintain vital water infrastructure, to ensure that they have access to clean and safe water not just today but also in the years to come.

Work on a deep well in Ciudad Sucre, Apure State



HUMANITY BEHIND BARS: THE ICRC'S COMMITMENT TO DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF PEOPLE DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY

Regardless of the reasons why a person has been deprived of their liberty, it is an overwhelming and heart-rending experience not just for those who are behind bars but also for their families, who, in many cases, cannot visit them on a regular basis. **The ICRC's neutral and impartial work is unique and necessary because of the special circumstances in which these people find themselves and the humanitarian challenges they face.**

The ICRC works with prison authorities to improve living conditions in detention centres and to ensure that those held there are treated with dignity. Regular ICRC visits to prisons are a key tool for monitoring detention conditions, ensuring that international standards are respected and supporting the authorities in finding concrete solutions to existing needs. **In 2023, a total of 9,657 people deprived of their liberty received ICRC visits in 12 civil and military detention facilities.** The ICRC also gave presentations on international standards on the treatment of people deprived of their liberty, the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules, to a total of 840 military and civil custodial staff members. Wherever possible, **the ICRC seeks ways to involve the detainees in the design and implementation of its activities, for instance in the the support given to maintenance teams in two prisons.**

Furthermore, meetings of the inter-institutional round table – comprising different players from the criminal justice system (Public Defence, Ombudsman's Office, Prison Ministry, Public Prosecutor's Office and Supreme Court of Justice) – were held in Caracas to discuss various topics. It was thus agreed to produce four posters on judicial guarantees with a description of the different stages of legal proceedings, their timeframes and the obligations of the various institutions in each of them, so that detainees and their families would be better informed.

In April, June and October, three medical-legal support days **were organized on the right to health and corresponding judicial measures, such as the request and granting of humanitarian measures, for 340 detainees in Fénix and David Viloría prisons in Lara State.**



9,657

detainees received visits.



12

civil and military places of detention were visited.



840

custodial staff attended presentations on the Nelson Mandela and Bangkok Rules.

SEPARATED FAMILIES AND MISSING PERSONS: FAMILIES SHOULD BE ABLE TO STAY UNITED

Thousands of families live with the absence of a loved one and the need for news of the person they hope will return home one day. This is why the ICRC works tirelessly, with the Venezuelan Red Cross, to prevent families from being torn apart and people from going missing. It helps to provide families with information on the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones; restore and maintain contact between family members and preserve family unity; exchange messages between family members; and give guidance and support to families searching for missing loved ones.

Families of missing persons not only desperately want to know what happened to them and where they are, but they also have needs caused by the separation or disappearance of their loved one. They are likely to require mental health and psychosocial care, as well as legal, administrative and economic support, especially if the missing person was the family breadwinner. The ICRC is thus committed to providing comprehensive support to the families of missing persons in their efforts to determine the whereabouts and fate of their loved ones and in accessing the right channels to meet their needs.

What did we do in 2023?



In cooperation with the Venezuelan Red Cross, **we supported 267 families in the search process**, helping them obtain information about the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones.



Six unaccompanied children and adolescents abroad were reunited with their families in Venezuela.



We facilitated the exchange of information to help identify 11 Venezuelans who had died outside the country, so that their families could know for certain what had happened to their loved ones.



We supported the families in the repatriation process of eight Venezuelans who had died outside the country.



We provided 70 pieces of guidance to 42 families on how to proceed in the search for their loved ones and how to meet other needs caused by their disappearance.



We assisted three family associations in their search efforts, coordination, representation and support for other relatives of missing people.



We facilitated four meetings of family members of missing persons, so they could exchange experiences and expand their solidarity network. This included participation in the Third International Conference for Families of Missing Persons.

The ICRC and the Venezuelan Red Cross run a free Restoring Family Links service. There is a phone number you can call if you have lost contact with a family member or if a loved one has disappeared as a result of a humanitarian situation.

You can contact us at: Telephone: 0412 266 5945 / Email: familiares.vzla@icrc.org

BY TAKING CARING OF THOSE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US, WE HONOUR THEIR MEMORY AND SUPPORT THEIR LOVED ONES

The ICRC's forensic work in Venezuela seeks to promote the integration of best practices in the medico-legal system and strengthen the capacities of forensic personnel, to ensure the traceability, identification and handover of deceased persons. We provide training and material support so that forensic experts can do their work properly for the benefit of the deceased and their families. **In 2023, 90 members of the Scientific, Criminal and Criminalistic Investigation Service Corps (CICPC) and the Medical and Forensic Science Department (SENAMECF) in El Llanito, Tumeremo, San Félix and the Capital District participated in meetings to review recommendations on proper and dignified management of the deceased, the related legal framework, inter-institutional coordination, the identification of human remains and best practices for the recovery of human remains. In addition, 148 officers from the Bolivarian National Armed Forces in the Capital District and Apure State received recommendations regarding the treatment of deceased persons by non-specialized personnel in emergency situations.**

Throughout the year, the ICRC worked with the authorities and forensic facilities in areas affected by armed violence to provide training and coaching for their teams and create decent conditions for them to carry out their important task of identifying the deceased, as well as helping families in searching for their loved ones, getting answers and bringing closure to their grief.

Rehabilitation of the morgue in San Fernando, Apure State



C. Martín / ICRC

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: ENDING THE WAIT

Each year, hundreds of migrants disappear while trying to reach a better life far from their homes. This was the case on 28 May 2021, when a boat from Mauritania was found adrift off the island of Tobago, in Trinidad and Tobago. The vessel carried the remains of young migrants who had perished at sea.

In response to a request for support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and CARICOM of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the ICRC delegations in Venezuela and Mauritania mobilized multiple resources to locate and assist the communities and families potentially linked to this tragic event. The ICRC contacted and visited families in Mauritania whose loved ones might have been on the boat. We collected their tracing requests and biological reference samples for comparison with the genetic material of the deceased. **In 2023, 51 genetic profiles and biological profile information on the missing persons were transmitted by the ICRC to forensic specialists at the medico-legal institute of Trinidad and Tobago, to support the identification of the human remains from the boat.** This collaboration between forensic doctors in Trinidad and Tobago and the ICRC with families searching for missing loved ones **helped ascertain the identity of seven of the migrants who had lost their lives at sea.**

TUMEREMO MORGUE: DIGNIFIED MANAGEMENT OF THE DEAD IN REMOTE AREAS

Much of southern Bolívar State lacks access to specialized community services, including forensic facilities. Proper management of the bodies of those who have died as a result of violence in the area is thus very difficult. Given the community's need for a structure able to handle the bodies of the deceased in an appropriate and dignified manner, and in support of the medico-legal structures responsible for the management of corpses (SENAMECF), **the ICRC is completed the construction of a new morgue in Tumeremo.** This facility will not only improve access to proper medico-legal management, especially for cases in the municipality of Sifontes and the south of the state, but will also provide proper conditions for quality work by forensic staff. It should moreover expedite the authorities' ability to provide families with answers on the fate and whereabouts of missing loved ones.



Solar panels at El Cruce outpatient clinic, Zulia State

K. Guzmán / ICRC

ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION, ADAPTATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING: FOR BETTER PREPARED COMMUNITIES

The ICRC is conscious of the humanitarian impact of environmental and climate crises, especially in areas affected by conflict and armed violence, where the population is vulnerable in multiple ways. We are committed to incorporating in our protection and assistance programmes all possible measures to reduce our environmental impact. In so doing, we involve the communities in raising awareness of the different risks facing them and in strengthening their resilience and adaptation capacities (disaster risk reduction and anticipatory measures), to prepare them for situations that may affect many different aspects of their lives, including their physical and mental health and food, water and economic security.

In 2021, the ICRC set out its commitment to climate action in a charter drawn up jointly with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with the support of an advisory committee and in consultation with representatives of the humanitarian sector. In line with this document, the ICRC undertakes to maximize the environmental sustainability of its work and rapidly reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

To this end, we have carried out and promoted measures aimed at mitigating the potential environmental impact of our humanitarian activities. In so doing, we work with local players and communities to better understand the real climate and environmental risks in each context and define evidence-based solutions.



Read here: Solar energy improved the lives of patients in communities of Zulia and Bolívar.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2023:

Access to health care



We implemented clean energy generation systems by installing photovoltaic panels at health centres in the communities of El Cruce and El Choco, in the states of Zulia and Bolívar. We strengthened the population’s coping mechanisms with respect to situations of social vulnerability.



Food and economic security

Through the urban gardens project, we promoted agriculture based on agro-ecological principles.

Hectares reclaimed



8 areas previously used as rubbish dumps.

equivalent to **5.800** m²

67 %

reduction in community rubbish dumps (100% community-organized initiative)

A good substrate for planting was created by cleaning the soil and removing inorganic waste in the preparation phase of:

0,6 hectares

= 84 vegetable gardens.

Care for the environment through the use of recycled products

Materials donated by the ICRC



108

rubber tyres



376

wooden pallets

Materials collected by the community



968

PET bottles



541

other items: washing machine tubs, disused refrigerators.

Training in and application of agricultural techniques adapted to climate change



Increased community awareness of environmental protection

In 2024, the ICRC’s environmental management will continue along three main lines:

Implementing activities aimed at mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, such as waste recycling and material rejection, among others, and reducing our carbon footprint.

Identifying potential environmental impacts of our activities, leading to the implementation of measures to prevent, mitigate and correct them.

Incorporating environmental improvement activities aimed at conservation and the recovery of degraded areas. These activities will be complemented by two cross-cutting components: environmental awareness-raising and the management of common and hazardous waste.



2024: COMMITTED TO OUR CORE HUMANITARIAN MANDATE

The lessons we have learned and our commitment to the work we do in the different communities – what we have done in the past, are doing today and will keep doing in the future – are our main motivation to adapt and keep going, with activities that are more closely linked to our core humanitarian mandate. At all times, we place priority on an integrated, people-centred approach to protection, working in partnership with other institutions, to prevent and respond to the consequences of violence in the country.

In 2024:



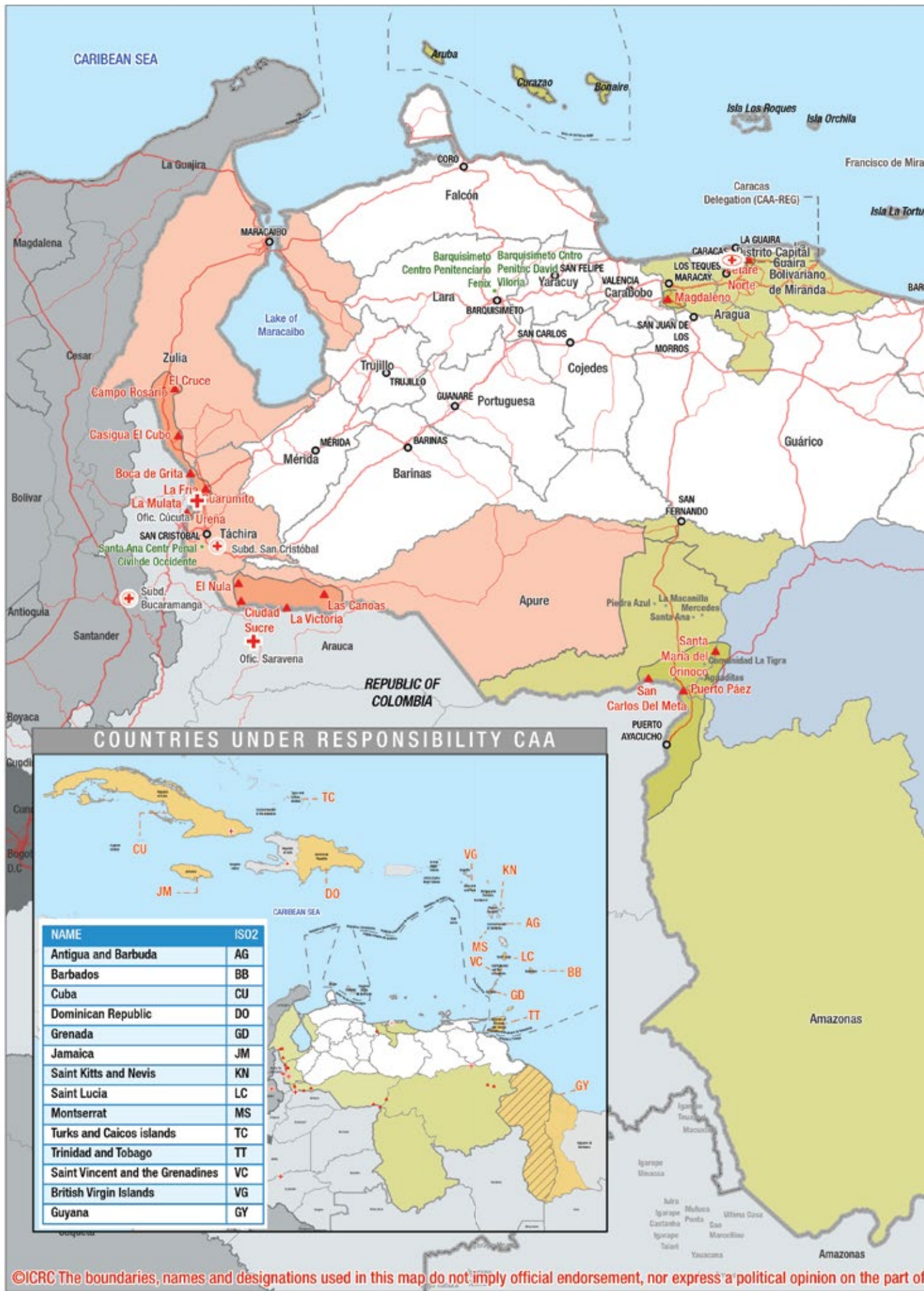
The delegation will adapt its multidisciplinary response to address the humanitarian needs arising from violence in the priority areas of Miranda, Aragua, Apure, Táchira, Amazonas, Zulia and Bolívar, with the goal of reducing the vulnerability of affected communities and building their resilience to the consequences of violence. We will also work to strengthen and build the capacity of public players. The delegation will continue to factor climate risks into the planning and implementation of its activities.



In Venezuela, the delegation will work with and support the Venezuelan Red Cross, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. We will build on effective, technical and operational cooperation, encompassing ongoing efforts in the fields of protection, prevention, assistance, networking and shared response, such as the Safer Access and First Aid programmes and accountability to affected people. In the Caribbean region, the ICRC will give priority to the National Red Cross Societies of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago, placing focus on the promotion of IHL, the protection of family links and migration issues.



The ICRC will promote the integration and ratification of IHL and other treaties in Venezuela and the Caribbean countries. This will go hand in hand with promotion of the ICRC's regional and global humanitarian diplomacy agenda.



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**Venezuela:
Regional Delegation
Caracas (CAA).
Areas of
Responsibility and
Priority Zones.**

January 2024

Legend:

- Areas of Responsibility (AoR)
 - Caracas Delegation (CAA-REG)
 - AoR CAA / Priority Zones
 - Puerto Ordaz (PUO)
 - AoR PUO / Priority Zones
 - San Cristóbal (SCI)
 - AoR SCI / Priority Zones
 - Countries Under Responsibility CAA
 - AoR CAA
 - Colombia (BOG) - Brazil (BRA)
 - Delegation Subdelegation
 - Office
- Operational Areas**
- ▲ Priority Zones
 - Prioritized Structure
- Keys Element:**
- ⊕ Regional Delegation CAA
 - ⊕ Subdelegation ICRC
 - + Office
 - Cities
 - Road

Data Sources:
 ICRC processes, Borders and Contacted territories:
 ICRC referential, Simón Bolívar Geographical Institute
 Relief, Cities, Rivers: IGN, OSM
 Document Name:
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 Prepared by: Andrei León/Specialist A&E
 Validated by: Jhoan Urquía/Coordinador Análisis y Evidencia
 Date: 2/2/2024
 Coordinate System: WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere
 Use: Internal



...the ICRC, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned.











We help people around the world who are affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, doing all we can to protect their lives and dignity and to alleviate their suffering, often working together with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners. We also seek to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening universal humanitarian law and principles.

We are an organization that carries out life-saving activities in conflict zones, working hand in hand with local communities to understand and meet their needs. Our experience and expertise enable us to respond quickly, effectively and impartially.

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