

SRI LANKA

WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOOD PRISON HEALTH

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2018



There are close to 11 million people in penal institutions worldwide and their numbers are growing. One third of prisoners leave prison each year and there are frequent movements between prisons and the community.

Communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, and hepatitis, as well as mental health problems are more common in prisoners than in the community. Non-communicable diseases are also prevalent. Living conditions of the prisons across the world are often unhealthy. Overcrowding and poor hygiene are common. This is why it is important to take care of prisoners' health. This is also why prison health must be part of the public health system in every country. Prisoners share the same right to health and well-being as any other person.

The ICRC humanitarian activities in Sri Lanka include visits to persons deprived of their liberty to ensure that their conditions of detention and treatment meet local and international standards. In 2015, the ICRC, in agreement with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Health, Nutrition and Indigenous medicine (MoHNIM), conducted an assessment of prison health services. In July 2016, the MoHNIM, the Department of Prisons (DoP) and ICRC signed a Letter of Agreement and launched the Prison Healthcare Strengthening Pilot Project, focusing on three priority areas: health information system, human resources for healthcare and health service delivery.

At the end of last year, three representatives from the MoHNIM and DoP were invited to attend the 2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Prison Health (APCPH), held in Cambodia. This conference, organized by the ICRC, aimed at bringing together experts from different sectors related to prison health and to share best practices, innovative approaches and methods / techniques used to overcome or handle challenges in prisons. Governance and leadership, health information management system and health services delivery were the issues debated during the conference. Dr Amal Harsha de Silva, Deputy Director General of Medical Services from Sri Lanka MoHNIM, was invited to present on the "Piloting integration of Prison Health Information System into the national HIS".

THE GALLE DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ISSUES AND SECURITY



The annual Galle Dialogue, organized by the Sri Lanka Navy in partnership with the Ministry of Defence took place in Colombo in October. This international maritime conference provides a common platform for deliberations on maritime issues and enhanced cooperation on maritime security. It was the second year the ICRC was participating in it and was represented by Mr Ken Hume, Head of Armed and Security Forces Unit, who presented the humanitarian perspective on the field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

The theme of this year's conference was 'Synergizing for Collaborative Maritime Management'. It brought together local and foreign scholars, and experts in maritime and naval affairs from over 50 countries.



The engagement of national and international militaries in disaster management and disaster response is not new. However, in Asia - Pacific in particular, there is a progressive institutionalization of this role in some national militaries, who form an integral part of National Response Mechanisms and for whom HADR has become a core function.

Based on its humanitarian mandate, the ICRC has a unique dialogue with armed and security forces, police, and non-state armed groups in over 100 countries across the globe. Mr Hume heads the unit responsible for supporting this dialogue, also known as the FAS Unit. It has over 60 field delegates embedded in ICRC delegations worldwide, the majority of whom are retired senior military and police officers. Their primary role is seeking to ensure the law is incorporated into doctrine, training, procedures and operational practice. Internally, these experts help ICRC better understand the operational challenges of modern conflict and law enforcement.



SRI LANKA HOSTS 32ND SOUTH ASIA TEACHING SESSION ON IHL



Over 30 participants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the South Asia Teaching Session (SATS) held in Colombo from 3-8 December 2018. This bi-annual regional event organised by the ICRC is an opportunity for academics, civil society, military officers and government officials to come together to learn about IHL and share views on related areas.

During the six days delegates learnt about the basic principles of IHL, prisoners of war, sexual violence and armed conflict, transitional justice, protection of children during armed conflict, means and methods of warfare and peacekeeping.



This year, the expert resource persons were from various backgrounds from the South Asian region. ICRC Legal Advisers played a crucial role in facilitating discussion on current topics, with a view to conveying the ICRC's institutional position on key issues.

The weeklong event was concluded with a review test, which included questions on topics addressed during the session.



FACTS & FIGURES

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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS

Met **1,100** families to follow up on their tracing enquiries and registered **65** new cases of missing persons; Provided (through the Accompaniment Programme) weekly psychosocial support sessions to relatives of around **450** missing persons; Gave **204** families cash grants to develop their livelihoods.



DETAINEE WELFARE

Visited **30** detainees throughout the country and shared findings and recommendations confidentially with prison authorities; Gave **88** families each a travel allowance to visit their relatives in detention.



PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL)

The moot court teams from Faculty of Law, University of Colombo and Department of Law, University of Jaffna took part in the regional moot court competition held in Tehran, Iran from 4-6 December 2018. The team from the University of Colombo qualified for the international competition to be held in Hong Kong in March 2019.

Pre-deployment briefings were delivered to the military contingent destined for Mali; conducted IHL disseminations for **98** officers at the Officers Career Development Centre, for **23** Senior Commanders from Security Forces Headquarters (Central), and **23** middle ranking officers attending the UN Staff Officer Course (UNSOC); delivered a Rules of Engagement (RoE) course for **21** Army Officers at the Armoured Corps Camp.

3-hour session on use of force, firearms and detention conducted for **21** newly promoted Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASPs) at National Police Academy, Katana.



SUPPORT TO THE SRI LANKA RED CROSS SOCIETY (SLRCS)

550 school bags, **10,000** books, **830** kaftans, **1,000** sarongs, and **500** baby relief items were distributed during the North East monsoon floods; **90** students and **22** Government officers from Hambantota District learnt about humanitarian principles and the Red Cross Red Crescent movement; **43** participants from **25** district branches shared their experiences on the dissemination of humanitarian principles; **21** volunteers from **9** district branches qualified as First Aid instructors; **176** volunteers trained in advance first aid techniques out of which **136** sat for an all Island exam; SLRCS Galle branch delivered first aid services at the Benthara perahera; **769** staff and volunteers learned actions and measures the National Society must take when responding to emergency situations which ensure also their own safety.




International Committee of the Red Cross
29, Layards Road, Colombo 05
Sri Lanka
T: +94 (11) 250 33 46 F: +94 (11) 250 33 48
E-mail: colombo@icrc.org www.icrc.org/lk
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Vavuniya office
70, Vairavar Kovil Road
Vairavarpuliyankulam
Vavuniya
T: +94 (0)24 222 28 55
F: +94 (0)24 222 25 37

Batticaloa office
Manresa Road
Kothukulam, Pillayaredi
Batticaloa
T: +94 (0)65 222 70 70



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