



# ICRC

## Activities in Bangladesh

January – December 2011



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## Assisting people affected by violence

Following an outburst of violence, which broke out on April 17 in the district of Khagrachari, Chittagong Hill Tracts, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) provided aid to the victims of the violence by:

- Distributing food items (rice, oil, salt and pulses), cooking equipment and various household and hygiene items to 720 people

## Helping returning migrant workers

Since the eruption of the crisis in Libya, the ICRC has helped thousands of Bangladeshi workers who fled the country. Following the tracing requests from the relatives of 75 Bangladeshi nationals trapped in Libya, the ICRC delegation in Dhaka re-established contacts between them and their families in Bangladesh. With the ICRC support, the volunteers of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society provided medical support to the returnees and allowed them to contact their families:

- In the period between February and July, returning workers made around 13'000 calls to their family members
- More than 1'600 migrants received medical assistance upon their arrival at the airport

- The ICRC provided vehicles to transport three injured migrants to their home district and assisted one of them with an emergency surgery.

## Restoring Family Links

Maintaining dialogue with authorities regarding Bangladeshi citizens detained abroad, ICRC ensured communication between the detainees and their families in Bangladesh.

- The ICRC distributed 16 Red Cross Messages (RCM) among the families of Bangladeshi citizens detained in Azerbaijan, Pakistan, India, UK, Lebanon and Israel
- Organized telephone calls between three Bangladeshi citizens detained abroad and their relatives in Bangladesh.
- Facilitated the repatriation of four Bangladeshi nationals from Iraq, Malaysia and Israel to their home country.

## Cooperating with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society

The ICRC continued to support the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) in its tracing activities and restoring family links, as well as in carrying out a countywide dissemination campaign aimed at eradicating misuse of the Red Cross Red Crescent emblem.



- In order to enhance the capacity of the BDRCS in the field of tracing and restoring family ties, the ICRC and the BDRCS organised four workshops on tracing activities for 116 volunteers and staff coming from 16 branches of the BDRCS.
- The BDRCS and the ICRC visited the families of 32 Bangladeshi nationals detained in Jammu and Kashmir in India and notified the information of detention to their loved ones.
- To help stop the misuse of the Red Crescent emblem the BDRCS carried out ICRC-supported campaigns in Bandarban, Khagrachari, Feni, Munshiganj, Rangamati, Comilla, Magura, Narsingdi and Bagerhat districts of the country.

## Providing services to physically disabled persons

In September, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) in Savar signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining ICRC financial and technical support to the CRP aimed at supporting the most vulnerable physically disabled persons by:

- Increasing access to the CRP services
- Providing quality and adequate prosthetic and

orthopaedic appliances combined with physiotherapy treatments

- Strengthening the capacity of the CRP in Savar for producing quality and low cost orthopaedic devices based on the ICRC technology.

## Enhancing implementation of IHL

The 18th and 19th South Asia Teaching Sessions on international humanitarian law (IHL), organised by the ICRC in April and November in Kathmandu, Nepal and Bengaluru, India respectively, brought together state officials from South Asian countries to discuss the challenges related to the national implementation of IHL in their respective countries. Bangladesh was represented at both events by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs as well as the Armed Forces and the Police Service of Bangladesh. Earlier in February, the Additional Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and a Member of Parliament participated in the third South Asian Regional IHL Conference that took place in Malé, Maldives.

## Strengthening relations with armed forces and police

The Armed Forces of Bangladesh pursued efforts to integrate international humanitarian law (IHL) into their training and



doctrine and to improve knowledge of IHL among their members.

- Under the auspices of the Bangladesh Army Training and Doctrine Command (ARTDOC), two 5-day Training of Trainers courses on IHL were organised for Bangladesh army, navy and air force officers at the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT)
- Two seminars on IHL were held, one at the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) of the Bangladesh Armed Forces for the members of the Senior Command and Staff Course and the other for officers undergoing training at the National Defence College (NDC).

Officers of the Bangladesh Police Service (BPS) and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) attended presentations and training courses organised by the ICRC and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society throughout the year.

- Police officers from the remote Chittagong Hill Tract districts of Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachari increased their knowledge of the ICRC's mandate, its activities and basics of International Human Rights Law (IHRL) by attending information sessions held by the ICRC.
- The officers of the Police Service of Bangladesh reviewed the provisions of International humanitarian law and basic humanitarian principles and developed their skills

in providing first aid by participating in three 4-day courses conducted by the ICRC and facilitated by the BDRCS training department.

- Similarly, the officers of the Rapid Action Battalion participated in three 4-day courses conducted by the ICRC and facilitated by the BDRCS training department.

### Promoting IHL in academic circles

In its efforts to foster respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), the ICRC maintained partnerships with the universities in Bangladesh by encouraging them to offer courses in IHL and by giving assistance to professors who teach this subject.

- Between September 23 and October 1, more than 30 students representing 10 universities honed their skills and increased their interest in IHL at the seventh edition of the Henry Dunant Moot Court Competition on IHL hosted by the University of Dhaka.
- The winner of the competition – a team of three students and a coach from the Northern University, Dhaka - participated in a regional moot court competition for South Asian countries held in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Some 27 professors from Rajshai University, Islamic University of Kushtia and Kulna University attended a three days training on IHL conducted by the ICRC and

hosted by the Rajshai University. Similar event was organised in the Sylhet International University. Around 100 students from law and other departments of the International Islamic University of Chittagong (IIUC) attended a daylong information session on IHL organised by the ICRC.

- Along with other international and local organisations the ICRC supported the Empowerment Through Law of the Common People (ELCOP) in organising the 12th Human Rights Summer School (HRSS) held between 19 and 30 December 2011. One of the sessions of the course was dedicated to IHL and its application.
- Reporters in four districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts discussed IHL, the ICRC's mandate and reporting on disaster/internal violence at a one-day workshop jointly organised by the ICRC and the "Commonwealth Journalist Association" forum.



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