

THE ICRC BANGKOK REGIONAL DELEGATION

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2024

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been present in South-East Asia for over 50 years. Our first regional office for South-East Asia was established in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1973. In 1975, we set up another office in Bangkok, Thailand, to support those affected by the Indo-China War. During the period 1993–2000, our operations in Bangkok were expanded into a regional delegation to respond to humanitarian needs in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, in partnership with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In 2024, the Bangkok Regional Delegation was transferred oversight of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei, previously overseen by the regional delegation in Kuala Lumpur. Over the past five decades, we have been firmly committed to working with the authorities in the region, adapting to evolving humanitarian needs. We continue to work closely with authorities, civil society, and Red Cross and Red Crescent partners to promote international humanitarian law (IHL) and other international laws and standards applicable in local contexts, and to address humanitarian challenges. Today, the ICRC Bangkok Regional Delegation has also evolved into a regional hub, working across the Asia-Pacific region to share our expertise in both preventing humanitarian crises and responding to the needs of those affected by conflict and violence.



The boundaries, names and designations used in this report do not imply official endorsement, nor express a political opinion on the part of the ICRC, and are without prejudice to claims of sovereignty over the territories mentioned.



LIFE-SAVING CARE AND PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

In Thailand

- **673** patients wounded in Myanmar received financial support for treatment in government hospitals through our Weapon-Wounded Assistance Programme. Over **150** patients received physiotherapy after being discharged from the hospital.
- **2** outpatient shelters run by local community-based foundations in Mae Hong Son Province received improved access to water and sanitary facilities as well as physiotherapy equipment. In Chiang Mai and Tak provinces, **2** similar shelters received financial and technical support for growing vegetables and poultry farming aimed at providing nutritious food to patients. Additionally, **120** patients residing in **2** shelters in Tak Province, who were affected by flash floods, received essential household items and utensils.
- **37** medical practitioners, including those from Mae Tao Clinic, enhanced their pre-hospital care knowledge and skills through the ICRC's course on trauma care in Mae Hong Son Province. They also received medical supplies to facilitate prompt and effective pre-hospital care in the field.
- **4** surgeons were sponsored for the ICRC's conference on caring for conflict wounds, held in December in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **438** pre-service police trainees in Thailand's northern region attended the basic first-aid session organized by the ICRC.

In Cambodia

- **13,159** people with disabilities received rehabilitation services at ICRC-supported centres in Battambang and Kampong Speu provinces.
- **161** people with disabilities and **236** households received cash grants, technical support, vocational training or micro-credit loans from the Cambodian Red Cross Society (CRCS) to improve their living conditions. **10** disabled people received access to higher education and **52** participated in wheelchair basketball training. **126** children received school materials and uniforms and help to cover transportation costs.
- **12** representatives of local authorities in Kampong Speu Province attended awareness sessions on physical rehabilitation services and social inclusion programmes for disabled people.
- **30** physiotherapists from **7** medical facilities and **8** physical rehabilitation centres were introduced to national physiotherapy standards. **20** physiotherapy students received scholarships from the ICRC, in partnership with Mine-Ex foundation, to pursue their studies. **771** high school students from six provinces attended awareness sessions on physiotherapy as a career jointly organized in by the ICRC and Technical School for Medical Care of the University of Health Sciences in Phnom Penh.



RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY AND LONG-TERM NEED

- **40** women from **2** cooperative groups in Narathiwat Province of Thailand benefited from the ICRC's community-based livelihood support programme, in partnership with Prince Songkhla University.
- **8,000** villagers from **7** communities in Narathiwat and Yala provinces gained access to clean water through the restoration and installation of water filters and water supply systems.
- **23** people representing **12** community-based organizations in Mae Hong Son Province were trained to effectively manage project cycles while providing humanitarian assistance.
- **28** humanitarian workers from **10** community-based organizations in Tak Province attended a training session on installing solar power systems and water filtering systems. The session was organized jointly by the ICRC, Mae Tao Clinic and Imagine Thailand Foundation.



IMPROVING LIVING CONDITIONS OF DETAINEES AND RESTORING FAMILY LINKS

- **28** prisons in Cambodia were surveyed and detailed measurements of each facility were collected to identify gaps between the standard and current living conditions of detainees. This project was carried out jointly with the General Department of Prisons, supporting their efforts to improve living conditions in detention facilities.
- **8,509** Red Cross messages (containing brief family news) were exchanged between detainees and their loved ones across Cambodia.
- **273** salamats (short oral messages) and **204** Red Cross messages from detainees in **10** immigration detention centres across Malaysia were delivered to their loved ones. **6,035** detainees connected with their loved ones through **7,730** phone calls.
- **12** confidential meetings were held with Malaysian immigration authorities, including the commandants of immigration detention centres across Malaysia, to share feedback on activities carried out inside their facilities.



WORKING WITH AND SUPPORTING RED CROSS PARTNERS IN THE REGION

- **60** leaders and staff of the National Societies of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam strengthened their relationships by joining regional and international events that were facilitated and financially supported by the ICRC and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- **7** events, organized by the Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC), Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) and Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) with financial contributions from the ICRC, raised public awareness about humanitarian challenges around the world, the role of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in alleviating human suffering and the value of the Geneva Conventions.
- **35** new leaders, directors and staff of the Lao Red Cross (LRC) enhanced their understanding of the Movement through various induction workshops jointly facilitated by the ICRC and the IFRC. **2** training sessions were organized on the new code of conduct of the Viet Nam Red Cross.
- **70** communication staff members of the Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) enhanced their knowledge of the Movement and the proper use of the red cross and red crescent emblems.

56 chairpersons of the Viet Nam Red Cross' provincial chapters were trained in communication management, **60** communication staff enhanced skills in audiovisual production while **30** staff members were trained to deliver sessions on first-aid techniques. **20** communication staff members of the Lao Red Cross were also jointly trained in digital communication by the ICRC and the Thai Red Cross Society.

- **1,190** relief and hygiene kits were provided by the Viet Nam Red Cross and Lao Red Cross, with the ICRC's support, to people affected by floods and typhoons in Viet Nam and Laos.
- **1,300** university students and **700** officers of the armed forces in Cambodia were briefed by the Cambodian Red Cross Society (CRCS) on the Movement, the Fundamental Principles, IHL and the humanitarian activities of the CRCS.
- **300** villagers in Battambang, Prey Veng and Kampong Speu provinces in Cambodia benefited from Cambodian Red Cross' community awareness sessions on how to

mitigate the risks of family separation caused by migration and were informed about the Restoring Family Links services of the Cambodian Red Cross, with the ICRC's support.

- **35** tracing agents of the Cambodia Red Cross (from 25 provinces) attended a National Tracing Conference in Pursat Province. This event was co-organized with the ICRC and included the participation of the General Department of Prisons.
- **8** coordination meetings were organized with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) focused on enhancing the Restoring Family Links service in immigration detention. Discussions covered aligning efforts, analysing the humanitarian context, assessing capacities, identifying challenges and opportunities, and improving collaboration and response mechanisms to better reconnect separated families. ICRC and MRCS jointly visited **10** immigration detention centres across Malaysia to help families contact their relatives.



RESPECT FOR IHL AND OTHER PERTINENT NORMS

- **105** military officers in Cambodia and Viet Nam were briefed before being deployed to peacekeeping missions in Central African Republic and South Sudan. **69** military officers in Malaysia and Thailand were briefed on the relevance of IHL and peace support operations.
- **102** naval officers in Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam enhanced their understanding of the law of armed conflict at sea through seminars and round-table discussions.
- **122** military and police officers, as well as government officials involved in criminal justice in Thailand, were briefed on the relevance of international rules governing military security operations.
- **438** pre-service police trainees in Thailand learnt the basics of international rules and standards in policing and prevention of ill-treatment in detention. **227** military officers at the Royal Thai Army War College and National Defence Studies Institute learnt about IHL and other international rules in military operations. **16** military officers were trained to become IHL instructors.
- **273** military officers from the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College and Staff College and the Command and General Staff College of the Defence Academy Royal Brunei Armed Forces were introduced to the ICRC and learnt about the legal framework governing armed conflict and other violence.
- **40** military officers in Thailand participated in round-table discussions on preventing ill-treatment of detainees in early-stage detention and the importance of protecting health-care services in armed conflict and other emergencies, organized in partnership with the Judge Advocate General's Department of Thailand. **15** military officers in Cambodia attended a round-table discussion on reducing impact on civilians in urban warfare, organized with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces.
- **56** military officers in Malaysia were sponsored to attend two courses (6th Law of Armed Conflicts at Sea and 2nd Operational Law) at the Centre of Military and International Humanitarian Law (CoMIHL), National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), in Kuala Lumpur.
- **18** military and police officers from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam were sponsored to attend regional and global events. These included the Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations (SWIRMO) in Azerbaijan, the Asia-Pacific Operational Legal Advisers Seminar in China, the Seminar on Protection of the Civilian Population in Japan, the Asia-Pacific Naval Warfare Symposium in Indonesia, 22nd Law of Armed Conflict Competition for Military Academies and two courses at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in Italy.

- **38** officials from government agencies in Thailand attended a workshop on the challenges to IHL in contemporary armed conflict, jointly organized with the National Security Council of Thailand. **29** representatives of the Royal Thai Government and the Thai Red Cross were briefed on the digital red cross and red crescent emblems. **40** participants attended a course on armed conflict, other violence and negotiation in humanitarian action jointly organized with King Prajadhipok's Institute, Thailand.
- **39** members of the Malaysian parliament and government representatives received a briefing on IHL to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. **10** officials at the Malaysian Armed Forces' Defence Cyber and Electromagnetic Division were briefed on the relevance of IHL in cyber operations.
- **37** government officials from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Thailand among other Asian countries joined two peer-to-peer exchanges on the Arms Trade Treaty and Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, jointly organized by the ICRC and Cambodian authorities.
- **1** panel discussion, held jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bangkok, Thailand, promoted the protection of civilians against digital threats during armed conflict to representatives of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO) member states and Thai authorities.
- **1** panel discussion was held jointly with the Embassy of Switzerland in Singapore on the evolution of warfare and the relevance of IHL and a round-table discussion was held with the Singapore Red Cross Society on the contemporary challenges to IHL.
- **5** government officials from Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam were sponsored to attend the South-East, North-East Asia and the Pacific Advanced Session on International Humanitarian Law in Mongolia. **2** officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Laos were sponsored to attend the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in Geneva, Switzerland.
- **7** lectures on IHL, international human rights law (IHRL) and the ICRC's work were organized for university students in Malaysia and Thailand. ICRC experts joined **3** panel discussions and training courses organized by government and academic institutions in Malaysia and Thailand and presented perspectives on the relevance of IHL and new technologies, nuclear weapons, humanitarian access, and the interplay between IHL and IHRL.
- **5** IHL competitions were organized for law students in Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam with support from local universities and other partners. The winning teams will participate in the 23rd Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot Court Competition for the Asia-Pacific Region in Hong Kong in 2025.
- **10** students and **1** law professor from Cambodia, Laos and Thailand were sponsored to compete in the 22nd Red Cross International Humanitarian Law Moot Court Competition for the Asia-Pacific Region in Hong Kong in 2024. The team representing Thailand won the runner-up award.
- **3** podcasts were aired on Thai Parliament Radio with the ICRC's legal adviser in Bangkok speaking on the basic principles and contemporary challenges of IHL and the role of parliamentarians in promoting it.
- **50** lecturers and students participated in a panel discussion, jointly organized with Thammasat University, Thailand, on IHL and its importance in protecting people based on the movie *First They Killed My Father*.



RAISING AWARENESS OF HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

- **40** representatives of the Royal Thai Government in Bangkok attended a closed-door briefing on the humanitarian situation in Myanmar.
- **20** representatives of the Federal Government of Malaysia attended an online briefing on the humanitarian situation in Gaza.