

SRI LANKA

## MARKING WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY WITH THE POWER OF KINDNESS

MAY 2022



Every year, World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day is marked on 8 May to celebrate the dedication, compassion, courage and impact of millions of volunteers who offer help, care and life-saving services to people in their communities. This year's theme, "Believe in the power of kindness", was closely linked to one of the founding principles (humanity) of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), reminding people of the foundation of volunteerism.

In Sri Lanka, World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day was commemorated at the Vavuniya branch of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS). Organized by the National Society, the event included a blood donation programme at Church of Ceylon Tamil Mixed School in Vavuniya, where many volunteers donated blood to signify "human kindness". This was followed by donation of bed sheets, dry rations, sanitary and cleaning items and wheelchairs among the 100 residents, including orphans and people with disabilities, of Anbagam Mother Theresa Home in Vavuniya. Volunteers then cleaned the premises as shramadana (gift of labour) and finally wrapped up the day by planting trees at the Home.

Staff of SLRCS national headquarters, governors and volunteers from SLRCS Vavuniya and other branches in the Northern Province as well as representatives of the ICRC attended the event.

*Staff and volunteers of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are reaching record numbers of people with critical assistance amid the overlapping crises of COVID-19, climate-induced disasters and armed conflict. Around one in 524 people across the world (14.9 million people) have volunteered with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to give back to their communities.*

## TRAINING OF TRAINERS COURSE ON USE OF MILITARY IN LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS



The ICRC conducted a three-day Training of Trainers course for 30 international humanitarian law instructors of the Sri Lanka Army at Galle Face Hotel in Colombo from 22–24 February.

The main objective of the course was to enhance knowledge of international human rights law (IHRL) and raise awareness of international norms and standards guiding the exercise of law enforcement powers (arrest, detention, search, seizure, use of force and firearms). The course included practical exercises, case studies and videos to guide participants.

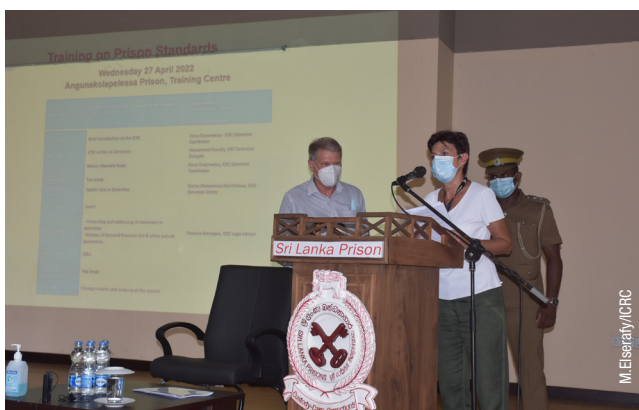
## ICRC RENOVATES MORTUARIES IN CHILAW AND BATTICALOA



The ICRC completed the renovation of two mortuaries in Chilaw and Batticaloa in March 2022. The initiative aims to improve the prevention of infection, while ensuring the dignified handling of human remains.

The renovations included modification to existing layout of the buildings to ensure proper workflow and the separation of contaminated areas. In Batticaloa, an enclosed area has been set up to enable grieving families to see their deceased loved ones without risking contamination.

## WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL RULES AND STANDARDS FOR PRISON OFFICERS



The ICRC conducted a workshop on international rules and standards of prison custody at Angunakolapelessa Prison training centre on 27 April. The workshop benefited 204 new prison staff and focused on the Nelson Mandela Rules, health care in detention and the prevention of ill-treatment in prisons. The ICRC plans to conduct two more training workshops on international standards in prisons this year.

## STUDENT FROM SRI LANKA RECEIVES GILBERT-APOLLIS PRIZE AT JEAN-PICTET COMPETITION



Teams from University of Colombo and General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, sponsored by the ICRC, took part in the Jean-Pictet Competition from 18–26 March 2022, in Albania. Both teams managed to reach the semi-finals and Anuk Dharmasena (extreme left in the photo), from University of Colombo, won the Gilbert-Apollis Prize.

## SEMINAR ON IHL AT DEFENCE SERVICES COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE



The ICRC organized a seminar on international humanitarian law at the Defence Services Command and Staff College in Batalanda from 14–16 March. The seminar combined lectures and case studies on IHL for 152 army, navy and air force

officers, including representatives from Saudi Arabia (5), Rwanda (1), Senegal (1), Maldives (1), India (3), Pakistan (3), Bangladesh (3), Nepal (2), Zambia (1), Oman (1) and Indonesia (1).

Issues covered at the seminar included the applicability of IHL in the conduct of hostilities and peacekeeping and the use of the military in law enforcement duties. Participants were also briefed on themes related to IHL such as conflict-related sexual violence, Health Care in Danger, urban warfare and support relationships, and the ICRC's position on emerging technologies and IHL.

## FACTS & FIGURES

(JANUARY- APRIL 2022)



### ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS

- 646 families were contacted for follow up on tracing enquiries, and 3 missing persons were registered;
- 1,742 weekly psychosocial support sessions were conducted for relatives of 535 missing persons, and 49 of them were referred to other sources for assistance in relation to their economic, legal and administrative, educational and health needs;
- 110 Micro Economic Initiative beneficiaries received business management skills training in coordination with the government veterinary and agriculture departments.



### MONITORING THE CONDITIONS OF DETENTION

- 260 detainees in different places of detention across the country were visited. Findings and recommendations were shared confidentially with prison authorities;
- 221 families were provided a travel allowance to visit their relatives in detention;
- 20 Red Cross messages (containing brief family news) were distributed and 35 were collected in detention;
- 3,677 detainees in 5 places of detention were provided ad hoc assistance in the form of hygiene and recreational items;
- 2 prison kitchens are being upgraded and will benefit 2,050 detainees;
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was donated to Mahara and Welikada prison hospitals to prevent and control the spread of Covid-19. The items included 7,600 PPE, 50 litres each of hand disinfection and liquid soap, and 200 bars of body soap;
- Laboratory equipment donated to the Mahara Prison hospital;

- An air conditioner was donated to the Welikada Prison Hospital morgue;
- 8 visits were conducted focusing on health care in 5 places of detention;
- 38 prison medical officers and 20 judicial medical officers participated in 2 training workshops on the Medico-Legal Management of Detainees, conducted by the College of Forensic Pathologists of Sri Lanka with the support of the ICRC.



## PROMOTION OF IHL

- A team represented University of Colombo at the virtual Asia-Pacific Moot Court Competition, organized jointly by the ICRC and Hong Kong Red Cross from 09-11 March;
- 20 IHL instructors (17 Army, 2 Air Force, 1 STF) participated in a 4-day Advanced IHL course conducted by the ICRC team at the Institute of Peace Support Operations Training Sri Lanka (IPSOTSL), in Kukuleganga from 24-27 January;
- 31 officers who were following the UN Staff Officers' Course at IPSOTSL joined a half-day awareness-building session by the ICRC at Kukuleganga on 3 March;
- 30 officers from the Sri Lanka Armed Forces participated in a five-day Rules of Engagement course by Director, Military Department of International Institute of Humanitarian Law, Sanremo (Col Mark Dakers) at the Galle Face Hotel, Colombo from 7-11 March;
- 31 officers of the armed forces and the police attended a lecture on New Technologies in Warfare and IHL conducted by the ICRC at the newly established National Defence College in Colombo, on 20 March.






## SUPPORT TO THE SRI LANKA RED CROSS SOCIETY

- 82 volunteers were trained in branch disaster response techniques and camp management;
- 14 sessions on humanitarian principles and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement were organized;
- SLRCS delivered a camp management training for the army military school focusing on addressing humanitarian needs in times of disasters;
- 1,600 bedsheets and 1,300 sleeping mats were prepositioned as stocks for monsoon seasons;
- 3 first aid services were delivered at district level events;
- 55 telephonic and face-to-face interviews were conducted as part of the joint ICRC-SLRCS island-wide Restoring Family Links (RFL) Needs Assessment.

**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

**Vavuniya Office**  
 70, Vairavar Kovil Road  
 Vairavarpuliyankulam, Vavuniya  
 T +94 (0) 24222 28 55  
 F +94 (0) 24222 25 37

**Batticaloa Office**  
 Manresa Road, Kothukulam, Pillayaradi  
 Batticaloa  
 T +94 (0) 65 222 70 70

 facebook.com/icrc  
 twitter.com/icrc  
 instagram.com/icrc



**ICRC**

Cover photo: SLRCS  
 © ICRC, June 2022