

ANNUAL REPORT



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE LAWS, RULES AND PRINCIPLES

25 May 2006

In Brief

Appeal No. 05AA091; Appeal target: CHF 700.577 (USD 600.631 or EUR 462.090; Appeal coverage: 43%.
([click here to go directly to the attached Financial Report](#)).

This Annual Report reflects activities implemented over a one-year period; they form part of, and are based on, longer-term, multi-year planning (refer below to access the detailed logframe documents). All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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The IDRL Programme seeks to reduce the vulnerability and suffering of people affected by non-armed conflict disasters by raising awareness, promoting the implementation, and encouraging the strengthening of laws, rules and principles that ensure a timely, adequate and efficient international response to disasters, where international involvement is needed.

IDRL pursues this goal in consultation with major stakeholders (NS, Governments, IGOs, NGOs and academics).

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMME

During 2005, the work of IDRL Programme was successfully scaled-up and intensified. The contributions from the British, Finnish, Austrian and Norwegian Red Cross National Societies, in addition to the continued support of the Australian Red Cross and AusAID, allowed the IDRL Programme to extend its staff and volunteers at headquarters level and to launch the IDRL Asia-Pacific Programme, based in the International Federation's Southeast Asia Regional Delegation in Bangkok. The activities and products developed throughout the year were based on the official mandate given by the 2003 International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and provided a significant basis for continuing and enhancing the International Federation's collaborative leadership role on IDRL.

The IDRL Programme has continued to increase awareness-raising of the need to have an adequate regulatory framework in place before a disaster strikes if international response to disasters, when needed, is to reach the disaster-affected victims in a timely and efficient way and has made an active contribution towards the consensus-building process on IDRL. In 2005, it started a consultative dialogue with different international stakeholders (governments, IOs, NGOs, RC/RC NS) involved in disaster response through briefings, permanent mission visits and meetings, which is to be continued in 2006 through a series of regional consultations. The IDRL Programme also strengthened collaboration with and programme ownership of national societies (conducting of case studies, IDRL workshops, extension of human or financial resources to the Programme).

While the IDRL Programme has continued conducting operational case studies, academic research and information updates through fact sheets in 2005, two major online substantive products were successfully developed: surveys for the NS,

Governments, IO, NGOs and private companies and a user friendly database containing over 200 thematic search items and allowing for country-specific thematic searches (Objective 1)

In 2005 also, the IDRL Programme significantly developed its communication strategy and tools. As such, it now sends out a quarterly e-newsletter to over 600 professionals and a weekly news service for over 200 registered readers.

Provided the IDRL Programme is able to increase and diversify its funding sources in 2006, the Programme will remain on target for achieving its four objectives by the 30th International Conference in 2007. At this Conference, the International Federation will submit an official report with concrete recommendations concerning the possible avenues for strengthening the currently existing IDRL framework.

OBJECTIVE 1. Compilation: Enlarge the collection and dissemination of IDRL laws, rules and principles

Progress/Achievements

Surveys: developed and distributed. With a view to gaining an overall picture of the major operational challenges and points of view of different types of disaster response actors, the IDRL Programme developed questionnaires for National Societies, NGOs, IOs and private companies (<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/idrl/surveys-b.asp>). The responses to the surveys will be analysed in the first half of 2006 and form a basis for the comprehensive overall IDRL thematic study (Objective 2). The surveys also serve the purpose of collecting national IDRL instruments for the IDRL database.

Database: developed and online. During 2005, the IDRL Programme developed a database containing 400 international, regional and some national IDRL legal instruments. It allows for user-friendly search covering 100 thematic search items. Main identified users are legal counsel and disaster managers of humanitarian organizations, as well as domestic policymakers interested in updating national regulations in the disaster response field. It is now available online (<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/idrl/publication.asp>)

Constraints/challenges

Database: collection of national disaster management legislation. In order to enable users to make country specific research and use the database for operational purposes, efforts need to be intensified to gather national instruments.

OBJECTIVE 2. Clarification and analysis of the scope of existing IDRL laws, rules and principles, including any gaps and weaknesses

Progress/Achievements

Case studies: 4 case studies finalised, 4 new identified and started

The IDRL Programme finalised the reports and recommendations on regional and national IDRL in Fiji, Nepal, Indonesia and Myanmar. In 2005, it identified and started background research of 4 new operational case studies to be finalised in the first half of 2006 (the 1999 Turkish earthquake, and the tsunami response in Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka). Operational case studies identify the key legal issues faced by different actors in international relief operations, explore the degree of implementation and usefulness of IDRL and identify best practices and remaining challenges. These reports are critical for gaining a deeper understanding of the link between law and operational challenges and will help to identify the gaps in the existing legal framework.

Legal research on Hurricane Katrina: Legal research was conducted on IDRL issues following Hurricane Katrina and discussed at a roundtable on foreign disaster assistance to the U.S, organised by the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency at the initiative of the IDRL Programme in Washington (November).

Background information sheets on IDRL: Included in the online database are a series of thematic background information sheets. These were progressively developed during the second half of 2005 and provide an overview of the type and content of existing instruments at the international, regional and national level relating to various aspects of international disaster response such as customs, telecommunications, transport, visas, principles and rights and quality and accountability.

Commencement of desk study: The research and document collection, conducted in 2005 has provided valuable information for the thematic desk study, which was initiated in 2005 and will be finalised as planned in September 2006. The study will analyse the scope, strengths, weaknesses and gaps in existing IDRL and propose recommendations to be taken up for further discussion at the Regional IDRL consultation forums in preparation of the 2007 International Conference.

OBJECTIVE 3. *Raising awareness & improving implementation*

Progress/Achievements

Development of 2 new communication tools: e-newsletter and weekly news service

The quarterly e-newsletter is sent out to 600 humanitarian professionals, containing both programme updates and information on recent legal developments (September, December 2005). Upon request, the Programme also provides a free weekly email news service of press articles relevant to IDRL. Today over 200 people have registered for the news service. Two fact sheets concerning lessons learned in the Tsunami and the Tampere Convention have been added on the web-site (www.ifrc.org/idrl).

Supporting National Societies in Asia-Pacific. The IDRL Asia-Pacific Project has been supporting National Societies identify ways to achieve more effective regional cooperation for disaster response, establishing more effective dialogue with governments and providing input into revisions of domestic disaster management legislations.

Representation at international fora. The IDRL Programme, including the IDRL Asia-Pacific Project actively participated and made presentations in several international Conferences (including the Asian Conference on disaster reduction (Beijing), World Conference on Disaster Reduction focusing on the corporate sector's role and responsibility (Mumbai), the Wilton Park Conference on Improving Natural and Regional Disaster Response Capacity (Sussex) and the United States Defence Threats Reduction Agency (Vicenza).

Training on IDRL and legal issues relevant to international disaster operations has been developed and conducted in over 10 venues both by the Asia-Pacific Project and the Global Programme, as reflected in the e-newsletter.

OBJECTIVE 4. *Closing the gaps*

Advocacy: Consolidating the IDRL network and preparing the 30th International Conference. The IDRL Programme continued a consultative dialogue with the different international stakeholders (governments, IOs, NGOs, RC/RC NS) involved in disaster response through briefings, permanent mission visits and meetings.

At the Geneva level, the Programme commenced a continuous exchange of information and dialogue with Permanent Missions, with the support of the RC/RC National Societies concerned. The aim is to gather the views of their respective governments on strengthening the currently existing IDRL framework, with a view to submitting concrete recommendations to the 2007 International Conference. It also strengthened its collaboration with national societies, so as to allow them to intensify ownership of the IDRL Programme (conducting of case studies, IDRL workshops, extension of human or financial resources to the Programme). Further discussions have been initiated with UN agencies, NGO groups as well as private firms, paving the way to the upcoming Regional Fora on IDRL in 2006.