

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)

ACTION & RESULTS: DECEMBER 2013 – MAY 2014

ICRC's operational priorities in the region focus on the protection and assistance of communities and individuals most vulnerable to and affected by armed violence; in particular migrants, missing persons and their families.

ACTIVITIES FOR MIGRANT PEOPLE

Meeting basic needs of protection and assistance

An internal study on the humanitarian consequences of armed violence in Mexico undertaken in 2011 by the ICRC, indicated that migrants are amongst the most vulnerable populations in need of protection. To address the situation, the ICRC launched a humanitarian programme with the objective to meet the basic needs (health, clean water, contact with their families) of migrants and work towards reducing their vulnerability. The ICRC works in close collaboration with the Red Cross National Societies of Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras to respond to some of the needs of migrants along the migration route from Central to North America.

The programme provides migrants with basic medical care and drinking water, assists migrants with serious injuries or amputations, and facilitates migrants' contact with their relatives through the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme's services and network. The RFL efforts include the services provided by the American Red Cross, which has set up several calling stations in shelters on the United States of America's (U.S.) side of the border with Mexico, offering international phone calls to migrants looking to contact their relatives.

Basic health care is provided in mobile or permanent facilities and through mobile brigades run by the Mexican Red Cross, located at strategic points along the migration route in Mexico, as well as at deportation points along the U.S.-Mexico border. In cooperation with the ICRC, similar services are provided by the Guatemalan Red Cross Society located in El Carmen (at the border with Mexico) as well as by the Honduran Red Cross Society in Corinto (at the border with Guatemala), where migrants repatriated from Mexico are assisted.



A Mexican Red Cross mobile clinic along the train tracks, Tenosique, Tabasco

Results

Over the past six months, more than 11'000 migrants received basic medical assistance at Mexican Red Cross Society/ICRC assistance points, and about 300 migrants contacted their families using ICRC-funded telephone services. Furthermore, about 400 migrants called their families from projects in shelters in the Mexican state of Coahuila. Some 3'000 repatriated migrants benefitted from similar services in El Carmen, Guatemala, and more than 1'600 migrants in Corinto, Honduras. The American Red Cross Society, in partnership with local migrant service organisations, has been able to provide more than 950 phone calls home for vulnerable migrants seeking to reconnect with their loved ones in three areas along the Texas and Arizona border, since the summer of 2013. The American Red Cross Society also provided first aid and water purification supplies to an Arizona desert camp.

In cooperation with the Red Cross National Societies of Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico, drinking water was distributed to 35'000 migrants over the last six months.

The ICRC supported the Mexican Red Cross Society in rehabilitating its water purification equipment and improved its capacity for both drinking water production and distribution.

Eight migrant shelters run by Mexican non-governmental organisations were assisted in the past six months, either through improvements to access to drinking water or by rehabilitating infrastructure. A physical rehabilitation room for migrant amputees was constructed at the shelter of El Buen Pastor in Tapachula, Chiapas – in southern Mexico – and was handed over to the director of the shelter at the end of November 2013. Overall, 800 migrants benefitted daily from the improved conditions in these shelters. A contest titled, "Supporting those who support migrants," was sponsored by the Migratory Issues Programme of the Ibero-American University in Mexico City and the ICRC. It received student proposals on how to improve conditions in civil society migrant shelters, while other groups worked on a hygiene promotion campaign along the migration route.

Migrants with serious injuries or amputations (many victims of accidents from falling from the La Bestia cargo train) were provided with crutches, walking sticks, wheelchairs and surgical material. They also benefitted from physical rehabilitation provided by institutions receiving ICRC support in Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras (22 new cases in December 2013 – May 2014). Physiotherapists from the region benefitted from ICRC-sponsored training in lower limb management of amputees in Colombia.

In Honduras, the ICRC coordinates a network aimed at providing better support to amputees and injured migrants and their families. This network gathers key partners such as the National Commission of Support for Disabled Returnee Migrants (CONAMIREDIS, an NGO funded by the Catholic Church) and the Centre for Returned Migrants (CAMR).

In September 2013, to complement the physical rehabilitation component of its humanitarian response, the ICRC launched a pilot programme called the Micro Economic Initiatives Project. It intends to socially reintegrate repatriated migrants with disabilities by improving their socioeconomic conditions. Participants join in a workshop where they receive training and support to identify business opportunities and to elaborate a viable business plan. Once vetted, each participant receives ascertained funds to develop their own micro economic initiative.

ICRC teams working in the northern border states of Mexico with the U.S. also monitored the humanitarian consequences of the deportation process along the U.S.-Mexico border, and recently in coordination with the ICRC Delegation in Washington D.C., presented confidential observations to U.S. migration authorities (Department of Homeland Security). The conditions of repatriation by Mexican authorities to Honduras and Guatemala are also being monitored.

The ICRC also conducted regular multidisciplinary visits to migrant detention centres in Mexico, during which it inspected the premises and conducted private interviews with migrants. After analysing the information gathered and its own observations, the ICRC provided written and oral confidential feedback and recommendations to

the National Institute for Migration (Instituto Nacional de Migración) on the treatment of migrants and their material and psychological conditions while they are being held.

ACTIVITIES FOR MISSING PERSONS AND THEIR FAMILIES

In 2013, the ICRC conducted a regional assessment on the needs of the families of missing migrants in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. Once the internal report was completed, the ICRC shared its findings with the families who were a part of the assessment, and will also share the findings and recommendations for concrete actions with national and regional authorities.

Furthermore, the ICRC supports national authorities in facilitating the search for information on the fate and whereabouts of missing persons throughout the region by encouraging the creation of mechanisms to search for, recover, exhume, identify and return human remains. The ICRC also provides training on interview techniques with a psychosocial approach, as well as technical support for forensic specialists.

The ICRC provides technical advice to the Working Group on Missing Persons created as a part of the agreement with the Mexican Secretariat of the Interior (Secretaría de Gobernación, SEGOB) in Mexico in 2013.

The Group is tasked with ensuring coordination between federal entities and developing public policies. Four sub-working groups were created in order to tackle specific issues concerning the strengthening of forensic services, the development of an information management system, the compatibility of national legislation with international standards and the establishment of mechanisms able to provide appropriate and comprehensive accompaniment of the families of missing persons.



Caravan of missing migrants' family members

Results

In September 2013, the Attorney's General Office (PGR) signed an agreement with the ICRC in Mexico for the donation of the ICRC Antemortem/Post-mortem (AMPM) data management software, and in February of this year, began training courses on the collection of data and the use of the AMPM database, as part of a unified system to search for missing persons.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Institute of Forensic Science and the Public Prosecutor's Office of Guatemala, as well as the Institute of Legal Medicine of El Salvador and of Honduras, also received the database and will receive a similar training programme for its implementation. In order to improve the ability to identify human remains, the ICRC encourages coordination among forensic authorities at a national and regional level.

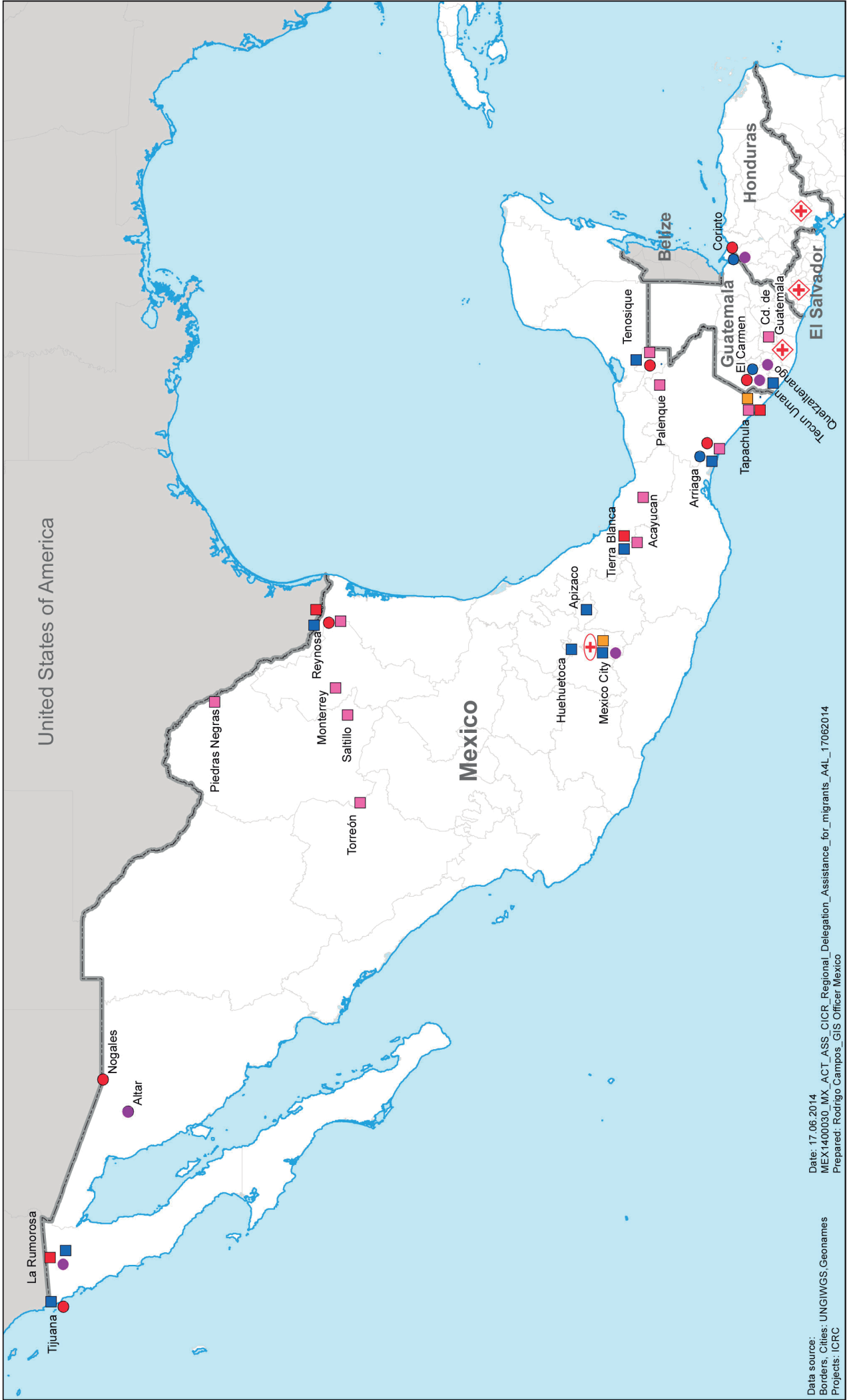
In 2014, the ICRC continues to provide various training courses to medical legal experts throughout Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico, on the handling of human remains and interacting with missing persons' family members. In May, a first ICRC course for lawyers of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on forensic best practices was held in Costa Rica.

MISSION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It directs and coordinates the international activities conducted by the Movement in armed conflicts and other situations of violence.



ICRC



Data source: UNGIWGS, Geonames
 Borders: Cities: UNGIWGS, Geonames
 Projects: ICRC
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 Prepared: Rodrigo Campos_GIS Officer, Mexico



ICRC



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ICRC Assistance for migrants

Legend

<p>ICRC projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Restoring Family Links ■ Water and Habitat projects ■ Other assistance to shelters ■ Orthopedic assistance for amputees 	<p>ICRC projects with National Societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water and Habitat projects ● Medical assistance to the migrant population ● Restoring Family Links
<p>ICRC Regional Delegation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊕ ICRC Regional Delegation ⊕ ICRC Mission 	<p>National borders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National borders Districts or States