

COLOMBIA



### **The solitude of war**

Julia Ruth lives in a poor neighbourhood of the Apartadó municipality in Antioquia state. The conflict in Colombia has lasted 45 years and few Colombians have been spared the consequences. Julia, who is 60 years old, is no exception: she has lost two sons to it. She spends her days alone and, following a traffic accident, confined to a wheelchair.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

COLOMBIA



### **Displacement**

Internally displaced persons are ordinary people who have been made homeless by war or armed conflict. They are forced to find shelter wherever they can – by clearing forests in rural areas or in urban slums. By the end of 2008, over 2.5 million displaced persons had been registered by Colombian national authorities: more than half of them were women and children. Their true number is probably much higher.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

COLOMBIA



### **Carrying on**

In October 2008, María Elena was caught in the crossfire between government forces and armed factions. She was hit in her left arm while breastfeeding her daughter and lost so much blood that she barely survived: her arm had to be amputated. Nevertheless, she still continues to help support her family.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

COLOMBIA



### **Strayed into a minefield**

In 2009, 20-year-old Francisco and a friend unknowingly strayed into a minefield. Francisco's right foot was blown off and his friend permanently blinded. Francisco is now in the University Hospital of Pasto, where persons from the Nariño department in central Colombia receive treatment.

Anti-personnel landmines and left over unexploded ordnance still do great damage in many rural communities in Colombia. It is impossible to farm land contaminated by these weapons: because of them, people are forced to leave their homes and unable to return.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

## **COLOMBIA**



### **Behind bars**

This women's prison, El Buen Pastor, is in Bogotá. A section of the prison is occupied by 75 women together with their babies and small children. The women are being held because of their alleged links to rebel groups and to crimes they are said to have committed as members of these groups.

The ICRC visits these detainees in line with its mandate: to ensure respect for the life and dignity of prisoners of war and other detainees and to prevent torture, ill-treatment or abuse, which violate essential rights and the basic principles of humanity, breed hatred and feed a cycle of violence.

Regular visits enable the ICRC to track prisoners' whereabouts and make recommendations to the authorities about any improvements to conditions that may be necessary.: to ensure respect for the lives and dignity of prisoners of war and other detainees and to prevent them from being subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**



### **Messages of hope**

Local radio stations broadcast lists, compiled by the ICRC, of children who have been separated from their families. Safi Nira Nzabimana is the mother of three pairs of twins. In October 2008, her village was attacked by armed men and her four oldest children went missing. Two months later, she and her husband learnt, through a radio broadcast, that their children were at a centre for unaccompanied children in Goma. The whole family was reunited on 8 January 2009.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



### **A sympathetic ear**

A counsellor, Sifa Muhima, (right) listens to a rape victim at an ICRC-supported *Masion d'ecoute* or "listening house." There is no sign outside the modest little house covered in plastic sheeting, but those in need know how to find the "listening house" where victims are given immediate medical care and support.

Sexual violence in armed conflict, long underestimated, has only recently been acknowledged to be a widespread phenomenon.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



### **Helping others**

Mama Louise's village was attacked by armed men in February 2008. After killing her husband in her presence, they raped her. Her 81-year-old mother and three young daughters were also raped. Two of the girls became pregnant.

Louise spent 21 days in a coma and three months in a safe house, where female counsellors helped her get medical care, listened to her and offered emotional support. Today, besides caring for her grandchildren, she provides the same kind of counselling to other rape victims.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



### **Waiting for news**

Ozias is eleven years old. Here, at a temporary resting place, he is wondering whether his parents are still alive. He would soon be reunited with his family through the efforts of the ICRC.

When people flee their homes families are often torn apart. With each new conflict in the Congo the numbers of orphaned or unaccompanied children increases.

A Red Cross worker explains: "In the current war, women are raped, children separated from their families, and fathers die. The children are left homeless and live like vagrants."

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



### **Together again**

Roger Bimael is a 17-year-old who was separated from his family and given up for dead by his mother. He was reunited with his family by the ICRC.

Respect for the family unit is implicit in the idea of respecting human dignity. Every year, the ICRC and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies help hundreds of thousands of people (displaced persons, refugees, detainees and missing persons) get back in touch with their families or learn the fate of missing relatives.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## GEORGIA



### **Uprooted and forgotten**

Vasilii Zigibarts is one of the 250,000 Georgians who fled Abkhazia during the conflict 16 years ago. Since then, he has lived in this bare room in a collection centre for the displaced in Zugdidi, Western Georgia. The region bordering Abkhazia continues to struggle to absorb the large population of displaced persons, most of whom live in abject poverty.

Antonin Kratochvil/ICRC/VII

## GEORGIA



### **Shelter**

In this garage, which has been converted into a collection centre, 20 displaced families live in shabby single rooms. The official rate of unemployment in Zugdidi is approximately 70 percent. Most people subsist on monthly public welfare payments of 22 *lari* (10 US dollars) and a diet of pulses and pasta.

Antonin Kratochvil/ICRC/VII

GEORGIA



### **Still displaced 16 years on**

The 20 families living in this converted garage share one outdoor lavatory and draw water from a single tap. They fled Abkhazia 16 years ago during an earlier conflict and have, for the most part, been forgotten as authorities focus on re-housing the latest wave of displaced persons from Kudori Gorge in Abkhazia after the recent conflict in 2008.

Antonin Kratochvil/ICRC/VII

GEORGIA



### **Helping hands**

In the period following the conflict in 2008, the ICRC has distributed food and household items to nearly 20,000 people in 27 Georgian villages closely bordering South Ossetia. Teams of villagers help to unload the provisions, which are distributed in accordance with lists drawn up by local village committees to ensure that only the most vulnerable persons receive aid.

Antonin Kratochvil/ICRC/VII

GEORGIA



### **At home but in need**

Most of those displaced by the conflict of 2008 have returned to their homes in the villages bordering South Ossetia. However, they remain vulnerable and in need of food and other essentials, such as warm clothes. The ICRC is providing them with assistance.

Antonin Kratochvil/ICRC/VII



HAITI

### **A family man**

Trapped in a shoot-out between UN peacekeepers and armed gangs in April 2005, Brice Osmer was shot three times and lost an arm. He still works, selling mobile phone vouchers and bags of water on the streets of Port-au-Prince.

“On a good day,” he says, “I earn a dollar. But it is thanks to my wife who sells food from dawn to dusk that my children don’t starve.”

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII



HAITI

### **Caught in the crossfire**

A long-term resident of the sprawling shantytown called Cite Soleil, 83-year-old Eleanise Tidor first found herself in the midst of gang warfare in 1993. She was less fortunate in 2004, when she was shot in the chest and the stomach.

In her corrugated-iron shack, she spends most of her time worrying how her children and grandchildren are going to manage.

“My body took the brunt of the bullets,” she says. “But my family has been hit the hardest. I can’t work or do anything for them. My grandchildren often go to bed crying and hungry.”

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

HAITI



### **Only mud to eat**

Cite Soleil might be a less violent place today, but it is just as impoverished as before. Most people have to manage on less than a US dollar a day. They struggle to pay for food and water and many of them are forced to eat mud cakes mixed with butter and salt to quell their hunger.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## HAITI



### **Aftermath**

Gonaives and the towns around it were devastated by four consecutive tropical storms in August and September 2008. About 800 people were killed and approximately 100,000 homes suffered damage or destruction.

Nine months on, many of those who lost their homes are still living in shelters or in tented camps like this one in Montruis.

The Haitian Red Cross has provided tents and maintains the water pump, but food aid ran out in October and the families rely on casual labour at a local restaurant in return for leftover food.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## HAITI



### **Suffering without end**

Roudeline Lamy and her daughter sleep on slabs of concrete in a shack that floods every time it rains. In 2006, Roudeline was shot in the stomach during a gun battle between rival armed gangs in Cite Soleil; her three-month-old baby, whom she was carrying, fell out of her arms and onto the ground.

Roudeline still suffers stomach pains and her daughter, now three years old, is paralyzed from the waist down. As her husband was killed by the gangs, Roudeline and her daughter are forced to rely on the charity of friends.

While most of the gang leaders from Cite Soleil are now behind bars, the inhabitants of the shantytown continue to be ground down by poverty, and the psychological wounds caused by the violence have yet to heal.

Ron Haviv/ICRC/VII

## LEBANON



### **Destruction and flight**

Nahr el-Bared is a Palestinian refugee camp in northern Lebanon where, for almost four months in 2007, the Lebanese army battled an armed group called Fatah al-Islam. About 400 people died in the fighting: Lebanese soldiers, Fatah al-Islam fighters and civilians. Much of Nahr el-Bared was reduced to rubble and most of its 40,000 inhabitants fled to the adjacent Beddawi camp or elsewhere in Lebanon. They lived for months in conditions that were often precarious. For the oldest among these Palestinian refugees, it was the second or third time they had been displaced. The camp is gradually being rebuilt, but as of late 2008 thousands of inhabitants had still not been able to return.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

### **LEBANON**



### **Life on the front line**

Tripoli may now be the only spot in Lebanon where tensions between political factions find expression on the street. This has to do, at least in part, with the high rates of unemployment, crime and drug addiction in these impoverished neighbourhoods. Syria street, on which this house stands, is practically the front line of this urban war.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

### **LEBANON**



### **Loss upon loss**

Almost two years ago, when fighting broke out between the Lebanese army and Muslim militias in the Nahr el-Bared camp, Hasniyye Yehia Tawiyeh, a resident, was forced to flee. Today, she lives in the nearby Beddawi camp.

Her husband was hospitalized after their flight. A week later, he died in her arms while she was helping him up the seven flights of stairs to their small apartment.

Her son visited her in 2007. One Friday, having gone to attend prayers, he failed to return. Hasniyye learnt afterwards that he was one of two young men who had been killed that Friday during a peaceful protest against the fighting.

“I have been through many things,” she says. “But all the hardship I’ve been through, I could put it in one hand. The death of my son, I would put it in the other hand and it would weigh much more than all the other suffering I have endured.”

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

## LEBANON



### **War in the city**

The conflict in Tripoli pits militias, sects and neighbourhoods against one another. It is a complex affair whose origins go back to the civil war in Lebanon. The latest round of fighting began in early May 2008 and peaked in July and August. The conflict erupted in Beirut where members of what was then the opposition party confronted the ruling loyalists on the streets of the city. The fighting soon reached Tripoli, endangering approximately 150,000 inhabitants.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

## LEBANON



### **Bread and bombs**

During the war with Israel in 2006, almost all the bakeries in Tyre were shut. This bakery in Rashidiyeh and another in Tyre proper were left the task of feeding the entire population. Bread is a staple food in Lebanon. With fuel and flour provided in part by the ICRC, the Rashidiyeh bakery was able to produce up to four tons of bread a day. This was enough for 100,000 people including both Palestinians and Lebanese.

Volunteers worked in two shifts, 18 hours a day. Securing the supply of flour was difficult and dangerous, as it had to be trucked in from Saida (40 km north) during unreliable lulls in the fighting. The task was made more hazardous by the fact that all the bridges to the entrance of Tyre had been destroyed and moving vehicles were often targeted. Men had to carry the heavy bags of flour across a temporary bridge spanning the Litani river.

Franco Pagetti/ICRC/VII

## LIBERIA



### **A lost childhood**

Mary, now 17 years old, was one of thousands of children whose lives were incalculably damaged by the 14-year civil war in her country. As is the case with almost every Liberian of her generation, her education was interrupted and her childhood snatched from her. She remembers the central event of her life:

“I was on my father's back when we came across the fighters. They told him to take me off of his back. Then they killed him and my mother in front of me. After that they took me with them and raped me. I was ten years old. Later, they let me go with my aunt, but only after she gave them money.”

Mary is now a student at the Child Advocacy and Rehabilitation Centre outside Monrovia. Run by the Liberian Red Cross, the Centre offers young people between the ages of 10 and 18 psychosocial counselling, training in such skills as tailoring and masonry, recreational activities and accelerated learning programmes.

Christopher Morris/ICRC/VII

LIBERIA



### **Dance of death**

Inside a Lutheran Church in Monrovia, Liberia's Trauma Healing and Reconciliation programme is underway. At group sessions, women share their war experiences and empathize with one another. Singing and dancing are used as means to come to terms with their painful past.

The conflict in Liberia imposed unimaginable suffering on women. One story that was told during a visit by the ICRC stands out for its brutality. “Rebels came to this woman's house. They made her stand in the middle of the room and ordered her to sing and clap and dance. Then they tortured and killed him. I cannot imagine how much he must have suffered. At the same time, they took turns to rape her daughter who was not quite 12 years old. Wherever she forced herself to look their way, she saw unspeakable things being done. All this while, of course, she was singing, clapping and dancing. When they had finished, they told her to find a bucket of water and clean the bloody knife. She was still singing, clapping and dancing when I found her in a camp for displaced persons.”

Christopher Morris/ICRC/VII

LIBERIA



### **Towards self-sufficiency**

The ICRC provided vital support during the long Liberian civil war and continues to do so now in post-conflict Liberia. The organization's emphasis is on its livelihood, health, water and sanitation programmes. It is also working on strengthening the ability of communities to carry on the programmes themselves. The ICRC has also been experimenting with new methods of conveying vital information. For example, in Monrovia, it is working with a local theatre group called Dam Opera, which uses traditional Liberian drama and dance as a teaching tool, to make people aware of the importance of sanitary practices and of maintaining water and habitat projects.

Christopher Morris/ICRC/VII

LIBERIA



### **I could not help them**

The *de facto* leader of the women's movement in Margibi county in Liberia is an unassuming 61-year-old woman known as Mrs Slocum. A nurse by profession who also serves as a midwife, she works full time in a family planning clinic in Kakata, the capital of the county. In her spare time, Mrs Slocum, who has eight children, founded the Margibi Women's Development Association, or MARWODA.

Mrs Slocum carried on her work throughout the war despite being displaced so many times that she has lost count. Like most Liberian women, she suffered terribly during the war. Two of her daughters were killed. Despite her efforts to leave the past behind, many painful memories remain with her:

"The walking and, literally, the falling and dying on the road, is what affected me most. The children would just drop and die. From hunger and from exhaustion brought on by walking great distances. Some of them died on their mothers' backs. The mothers would call out to me, but I could not help them."

Christopher Morris/ICRC/VII

## **LIBERIA**



### **Football for life**

Amputee football has been the source of enormous hope and solace for one of the most marginalized groups in the country: young men. They are, most of them, victims of the war. That some of them took part in it only adds to the stigmatization of the group.

"When you ask them how they felt after being amputated, most of them say that they wanted to kill themselves," says Paul A. Tolbert, senior coach of the national amputee football team. "Life no longer had meaning for them. Amputee football restores their hope. Take the guy who was named the most valuable player in the recent African Cup for amputee football. He was a very good player, but he lost hope when his leg was amputated. When I went to recruit him, I told him, 'You can make it. There is still a chance for you.' He has gained hope and, what's more, now knows that what he could not do, win a war when he had two legs, he is now doing on one leg."

Christopher Morris/ICRC/VII

## **PHILIPPINES**



### **Prisoners' welfare**

Inmates asleep on the floor of the church at the Manila City Jail. Delegates from the ICRC' visit over 60,000 detainees in 95 places of detention throughout the Philippines. They assess the conditions of detention, paying special attention to the needs of women and minors. The ICRC's efforts include such activities as improving ventilation, installing bunk beds to relieve the severe overcrowding, and providing hygiene and recreational items.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **PHILIPPINES**



### **So near and yet so far**

Roughly 300,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in the southern Philippines, between government forces and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, an armed group. A 79-year-old woman and her grandson stand in front of the home she was forced to flee in August 2008. Like many displaced persons in Mindanao, she is too frightened to return home permanently and has been living for months in a tarpaulin-covered shelter just a few miles from her abandoned village.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **PHILIPPINES**



### **Bedding on boards**

On the island of Mindanao, a child plays in front of his family's temporary home in an evacuation centre on the frontline between government forces and armed opposition fighters. While some families were able to find shelter in schools and public buildings, others are living more precariously, sometimes sleeping on nothing more than sections of cardboard.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **PHILIPPINES**



### **One more tragedy**

This young man – just 24 – is in the last stage of pulmonary tuberculosis. The doctor on duty says that he is already beyond help, like many other gravely ill displaced persons who have been forced to flee by the fighting in the southern Philippines.

This largely forgotten conflict has led to the displacement of roughly 300,000 people as of now. They become poorer with each flight from their homes and rice paddies. Many simply don't have the money or the means to seek medical care until it is too late.

The young man is given an IV drip and a chest tube in the emergency room and transferred upstairs to the TB ward, where, less than 48 hours later, he will die.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **PHILIPPINES**



### **The road to relief**

The ICRC provides rice, cooking oil, soap and tarpaulin sheets to tens of thousands of people displaced by the fighting in the southern Philippines. Here, on the island of Mindanao, two men cross a frequently flooded section of road carrying much-needed food supplies for which they had waited for hours in blistering heat. After heavy rain, this dirt road to an evacuation centre can become virtually impassable, isolating desperately needy civilians.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **AFGHANISTAN**



### **Disablement**

The life of a paraplegic with spinal-cord injuries is extremely difficult, but even more so in Afghanistan. Relatives play an important role in care and rehabilitation for patients. This photograph shows patients at the ICRC's orthopaedic centre in Kabul exercising with callipers with help from their relatives. Training patients and their relatives to cope with the challenges before them takes a minimum of two months.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **AFGHANISTAN**



### **At the *marastoon***

Women in Afghanistan have hard lives. For those who are ill, or have mental problems, things are far worse.

The 16-year-old in the photograph was abandoned by her parents when she was ten years old and left to roam the streets of Kabul. The police picked her up and brought her to the *marastoon*, or 'house of refuge,' run by the Afghan Red Crescent Society.

She does not talk to anyone. But she shouts and waves her arms when she is happy. When she is sad, she sits apart, silent and inscrutable. She has been at the *marastoon* for six years. She has no visitors and the staff know nothing about her. They call her *Gul ma*, 'Our flower.'

"Many of the women here have no notion of time," explains Nazuba, a nurse who works in the women's compound. "They just live from one second to the next." The women's compound is bright and clean. It has a garden and a wide terrace with a view of Kabul and the mountains beyond. The women will probably spend the rest of their lives there.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII

## **AFGHANISTAN**



### **One step at a time**

In the gait training room at the ICRC's orthopaedic centre in Kabul, Alberto Cairo, the head of the ICRC's orthopaedic programme in Afghanistan, works with a mine victim, a double amputee who has just received his two prostheses.

An amputee has to learn to walk again. It is extremely important for the patient to be helped to stand and to walk correctly, from the very beginning. A patient who learns to do so from the start will walk well for the rest of his or her life. Bad habits acquired early are very hard to change.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII



AFGHANISTAN  
**Indiscriminate weapons**

Landmines have been used indiscriminately in Afghanistan for the last three decades. Hundreds of thousands lie unmapped and undiscovered. Landmines have left an estimated 100,000 or more Afghan people disabled.

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII



AFGHANISTAN

**Human dignity**

James Nachtwey photographed detainees held by the Afghan authorities like the men in this photo. Sasha, an ICRC interpreter based in Kabul, accompanied him. Afterwards, Sasha spoke of what he had learnt:

"I discovered that many of them had held on to their sense of themselves, that they had emerged intact from some very difficult situations. Sometimes, I ask myself: 'In a situation like theirs, would I have done as well?' How they managed to preserve their dignity: this is the astonishing thing for me."

James Nachtwey/ICRC/VII