Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1276 (2002)[1]

Activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls and reaffirms its Resolutions 823 (1984), 881 (1987), 921 (1989), 991 (1992), and 1085 (1996) on the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

2. The Assembly pays tribute to the ICRC for the results of its work, guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The Assembly highly appreciates the manner in which the ICRC accomplishes its mandate with regard to both protection and assistance in favour of victims of armed conflicts and internal disturbances. Moreover, the role of the ICRC in promoting international humanitarian law cannot be overestimated.

3. In recent years, the ICRC has been called on to provide protection and assistance to victims of an increasing number of conflicts, including conflicts within Europe. In this context, the Assembly expresses its particular gratitude to the ICRC for its efficient action on behalf of the populations affected by the conflicts in the Balkans, and in the North and South Caucasus.

4. The Assembly notes with concern the multiplication of serious security problems faced by ICRC staff while conducting field operations. An increasing number of incidents involving the death of personnel imposes an urgent need for strengthening security measures by all parties concerned.

5. The Assembly welcomes the efforts of the ICRC in promoting a culture of tolerance, justice and peace across all civilisations, thus undermining the roots of terrorism.

6. The Assembly appreciates the efforts made by the ICRC to disseminate and develop international humanitarian law. In this context, the Assembly notes with satisfaction the ICRC's studies on the improvement of protection for the most vulnerable groups of the civilian population.

7. The Assembly expresses its appreciation to the ICRC for its important contribution to the events dedicated to the centenary of the 1st International Peace Conference, the 50th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 1999 International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

8. The Assembly fully supports the efforts of the ICRC in promoting ratification and national implementation of humanitarian law treaties, in particular with a view to the repression of serious violations of these rules.

9. The Assembly congratulates the ICRC on the success of its campaign during the 1990s, which led to the elaboration of a convention on the total ban of antipersonnel landmines. The Assembly supports the ICRC's proposal to elaborate a new protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Prohibitions and Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons in order to address the global problem of explosive remnants of war.

10. The Assembly welcomes the work of the ICRC regarding the consequences for the civilian population of the widespread availability of arms and ammunition.

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1. Assembly debate on 22 April 2002 (9th Sitting) (see Doc. 9388, report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mr Slutsky). Text adopted by the Assembly on 22 April 2002 (9th Sitting).

11. The Assembly notes with satisfaction the organisational reform under way in the ICRC, initiated by the Avenir Plan, and aimed at the improvement of working methods by making it still more result-oriented and efficient.

12. The Assembly positively assesses the ICRC's co-operation and relations with the countries where operations are carried out. Similarly, operational contacts with other humanitarian and relief agencies in the field are fully satisfactory.

13. The Assembly welcomes the new initiative taken by the ICRC to launch a process of reflection with a view to finding an answer to the tragedy of people unaccounted for as a result of armed conflict or internal violence.

14. The Assembly further welcomes the stepping up of its own co-operation with the ICRC.

15. Accordingly, the Assembly invites the governments of member states and of states whose parliaments enjoy Special Guest or Observer status with the Assembly:

a. to ratify, if they have not already done so, the 1977 additional protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction of 1997, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict of 1954 and its protocols, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998, the United Nations Convention on the Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons of 1980 and its protocols, and declare the acceptance of Article 90 of Additional Protocol No. 1 on the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission;

b. to ensure that international humanitarian law is strictly respected;

c. toinclude provisions of international humanitarian law into national legislation;

d. to include humanitarian law in military and police training as well as into formal national education policies and systems;

e. to promote the principles of, and increase knowledge of, humanitarian law within their own societies;

f. to co-operate with the ICRC in the field and facilitate its work when necessary, including with respect to access to persons kept in custody in connection with international or internal armed conflicts;

g. to respect ICRC personnel and its humanitarian action;

h. to react generously and to step up financial support for the ICRC's actions in response to future appeals;

i. to actively support the efforts of the ICRC in ratifying and implementing humanitarian law treaties and, in particular, to support the activities of the advisory service of the ICRC aiming at introducing in domestic criminal law punishment of serious violations of humanitarian law and crimes that come within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court;

j. to urgently pursue work in the group of governmental experts on explosive remnants of war established by the Review Conference of the United Nations Convention on the Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons in December 2001, and promote the adoption by the end of 2002 of a negotiating mandate for a new protocol on explosive remnants of war;

k. to introduce into national policies and codes of conduct on arms exports rules based on the respect of the recipient for international humanitarian law, as called for by the ICRC;

l. to undertake further efforts to improve knowledge about the ICRC and the role it plays, particularly during armed conflicts