

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) leads a discussion during the REGIONAL REVIEW OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON MIGRATION (GCM) IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC on “A migrant’s journey: a human perspective and humanitarian implications”.

ICRC GCM Virtual Side Event

10 March 2021, 12:30pm-1:30pm Bangkok Time

OBJECTIVE OF THE SESSION

The ICRC was pleased to host this side event during the **Asia and the Pacific Regional Review on the Global Compact on Migration (GCM)**, during which we aimed at drawing attention on the issue of separated, missing and dead migrants and ICRC’s action in this regard. Moreover, we wanted to shed light on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement involvement in a wide range of humanitarian issues linked to migration, with a focus on missing migrants.

INTRODUCTION

In Asia and the Pacific, our migration activities are focused on using our Family Links network to restore contact between migrants and their families, helping clarify the fate and whereabouts of missing migrants and supporting their families, and providing humanitarian forensic support. They also include delivering basic aid and services to migrants along the route, working in immigration detention, and engaging with the authorities to ensure that they fulfil their legal obligations so as to protect the lives, preserve the dignity and alleviate the suffering of migrants in vulnerable circumstances. Our direct action in favor of migrants is mostly in countries affected by armed conflict or other situations of violence, but in all situations, we support Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and contribute our protection expertise, particularly on Restoring Family Links/Missing persons and immigration detention.

DISCUSSION

The discussion was based on two videos:

- [Kenya: A journey of fear and hope | ICRC](#) (also available on Youtube)
- [Deceased migrants – giving them back their identities | International Committee of the Red Cross \(icrc.org\)](#) (also available on Youtube)

And led by Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur based ICRC representatives, namely:

- **Christophe BOURDON**, Advisor on Family links programs
- **Valentina CODELUPPI**, Advisor on Sexual and Gender based violence issues
- **Peter John EVANS**, Armed security forces coordinator
- **Udo KRENZER**, Regional Forensic manager
- **Catherine Marie MARTIN**, Cooperation advisor in charge of the relationships within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The area covered by each one of them alone would have deserved an hour; yet the speakers attempted to show the extreme complexity of what people go through and why it generates important humanitarian needs. The video of a woman painfully talking about her brother and son undertaking a dangerous journey towards Europe and never coming back allowed one of the speakers to explain the notion of “ambiguous loss”. Whilst the second video was meant to start a discussion about the search for missing migrants, mainly the role States and authorities can play in order to prevent migrants in vulnerable situations to go missing. The focus was also on their role as first responders to a difficult situation and when dealing with migrants in distress.

The search for missing migrants is a transnational - even transcontinental - undertaking requiring cooperation among a broad range of actors. A global intergovernmental framework for such cooperation had been lacking, but this changed with the inclusion - at ICRC's instigation - of **Objective 8 in the GCM**. With this, more than 150 States committed to establishing coordinated efforts on missing migrants, including by standardising the collection and exchange of information and establishing a transnational coordination for identification and communication with families.

If you are interested in getting more information on the event or would like to connect with us to continue the discussion, please write to sdouai@icrc.org.

Further reading:

[COVID-19: Operational response in Asia-Pacific | ICRC](#)

[Note on Protection of Migrants in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic \(icrc.org\)](#)

[Migration: Our work in Asia and the Pacific | International Committee of the Red Cross \(icrc.org\)](#)

[Missing migrants and their families: Journeys of uncertainty | International Committee of the Red Cross \(icrc.org\)](#)

[Panel discussion: Search and rescue in the age of Aquarius \(icrc.org\)](#)

ICRC, Missing migrants and their families: Recommendations to policy-makers, October 2017, available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/publication/missing-migrants-and-their-families-icrcs-recommendations-policy-makers> [accessed 4 April 2020].

See also ICRC, Comment on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, 27 March 2017, available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-comment-global-compact-safe-orderly-and-regular-migration> [accessed on 4 April 2020]

H. Obregón Gieseken, "The protection of migrants under international humanitarian law", *International Review of the Red Cross*, No. 904, April 2017, pp. 121–162: <https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/protection-migrants-under-international-humanitarian-law>.

T. Rodenhäuser, "The principle of non-refoulement in the migration context: 5 key points", *Humanitarian Law and Policy* [blog], 30 March 2018: <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2018/03/30/principle-of-non-refoulement-migration-context-5-key-points/>