

Activities of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

In this issue, which is devoted mainly to efforts to disseminate the knowledge of international humanitarian law, the Review has pleasure in presenting, by way of illustration, the activities of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross in connection with dissemination to various sectors of society through its Humanitarian Law Institute.

THE HUMANITARIAN LAW INSTITUTE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA NATIONAL RED CROSS

The Humanitarian Law Institute of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross (ROKNRC) was founded on January 8, 1976, the 73rd anniversary of the accession by the Imperial Korean Government to the first Geneva Convention of 1864.*

Its objective is to act as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the dissemination of international humanitarian law (IHL) as well as of Red Cross Principles to different target groups throughout the country. Its basic activities are to make Red Cross ideals better known to the public, to disseminate the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law, to guide and control the use of the Red Cross emblem, to undertake research in and collect the materials on Red Cross ideals and IHL, to operate other programs relating to IHL research and dissemination, to maintain a Red Cross library and to conduct studies assigned to the Institute on a mandatory or contract basis.

The Republic of Korea National Red Cross puts emphasis on disseminating international humanitarian law among members of the armed forces before any other target groups. To this end, the Red Cross Humanitarian Law Institute initiated a series of courses at national level in 1976: by the end of 1986 seven series of standard courses had been organized for instructor-officers of the Armed Forces and 16 series of courses for commanding officers from different units. The number of participants since 1976 amounted to nearly 2,000.

* The accession of the Republic of Korea to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 took place on 16 August 1966. The Government, having signed the Protocols additional to the four Geneva Conventions on December 7, 1978, ratified the same instruments on January 15, 1982.

The National Society has also held seven rounds of National Seminars on International Humanitarian Law since 1973, attended by Red Cross members, university professors, government experts and senior officers of the armed forces. The themes of the seminars were as follows: the methodological approach to efficient dissemination of the Geneva Conventions (1973), contemporary problems of international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts (1976), development of humanitarian law and national responsibilities (1979), new codification of international laws concerning the prohibition or restriction of the use of certain conventional weapons (1980), implementation and dissemination of international humanitarian law (1981), development of international humanitarian law (1982) and implementation of the Protocols additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions (1984).

The Institute also developed specific dissemination programmes among Red Cross members, especially young people.

Summaries of Red Cross Principles and the Geneva Conventions are taught as a compulsory subject to Red Cross Youth members, Red Cross volunteers and staff through various training courses which take place from time to time at the initiative of the Society's Training Institute or local Chapters.

In 1985, the Society gave courses on Red Cross Principles and ideals to 14 different groups of 597 staff members and to 229 classes of Red Cross orientation for 20,513 RCY members. The Society also conducted 56 rounds of teaching programmes on the Geneva Conventions for 3847 RCY members.

In order to disseminate humanitarian law among the general public, the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) Radio gave a daily lecture on the Geneva Conventions by an expert staff member of the National Society from April 1976 to December 1982.

The Institute has issued many types of publications in Korean to make the Geneva Conventions better known to all target groups: the Korean Journal of Humanitarian Law (Vols. 1 to 7), and Korean versions of the Commentary on the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Index of the Geneva Conventions, "Courses of Five Lessons on the Geneva Conventions", the International Red Cross Handbook, etc.

The Humanitarian Law Institute, whose director is Mr. Eun-Bum Choc, has an advisory committee on humanitarian law composed of eight international law professors from different universities and three government experts belonging to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs and National Defence. The Institute co-operates with the Korean International Law Association.