



**MUSEE INTERNATIONAL  
DE LA CROIX-ROUGE  
ET DU CROISSANT-ROUGE**  
17, AVENUE DE LA PAIX  
CH-1202 GENEVE  
WWW.MICR.ORG  
TEL +41 22 748 95 11  
FAX +41 22 748 95 28

# HUMANITY IN WAR

## FRONTLINE PHOTOGRAPHY SINCE 1860

*An exhibition organized by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum, in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross*

**Temporary exhibition from 3 March to 25 July 2010  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except Tuesdays – free entry**

### SUMMARY

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. Introduction                             | p. 2  |
| 2. Why hold this exhibition?                | p. 3  |
| 3. Exhibition layout                        | p. 6  |
| 4. Events in question                       | p. 7  |
| 5. Historical overview of humanitarian work | p. 9  |
| 6. About the exhibition                     | p. 11 |

### Appendices:

- Leaflet
- CD-ROM containing:
  - press photos, captions and rights
  - press dossier kit

---

### **Contact:**

Corinne Liardon  
Public Relations  
Tel: + 41 22 748 95 01  
Fax: + 41 22 748 95 28  
E-mail: [c.liardon@micr.org](mailto:c.liardon@micr.org)



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Humanity in War**

*Frontline photography since 1860*

*Humanity in War* traces the history of recent wars and illustrates the reality of contemporary conflicts and their humanitarian consequences. From the American Civil War which took place 150 years ago to the conflicts of the early 21st century, the camera lens has recorded moments of courage, dignity, challenge and hope against a backdrop of pain and suffering. The exhibition focuses on the people who suffered as a result of armed conflict and those that came to their aid.

The exhibition also relates the history of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, showing how efforts to alleviate the suffering of war victims have developed and changed in response to the changing nature of armed conflict.

*"Photography and the Red Cross both emerged in the second half of the 19th century. The new medium, rooted in the reality of the moment, far surpassed previous sketches and paintings in its ability to communicate the full brutality of war and the suffering it inflicted, on both combatants and civilians."*

-- Jacob Kellenberger, president of the ICRC

This photo exhibition includes a series of new multimedia clips, combining film and photographs, in which people tell personal stories of how they have been affected by armed conflict, or, how they help others to cope. The multimedia clips incorporate images from eight countries in 2009 taken by five leading war photographers, including James Nachtwey and Franco Pagetti. They depict the reality and brutality of armed conflict and other violence in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia and the Philippines. The video collations show that even in the darkest hours of despair there is a sense of hope and pride among the victims.

*"Photographs are not cold documents that merely prove something happened. They put a human face on events that might otherwise appear to be abstract or ideological, a matter of statistics or monumental in their global impact. No matter how overwhelming an event, what happens to people at ground level happens to them individually, and photography has a unique ability to portray events from their point of view. Photography gives a voice to the voiceless. It's a call to action."*

-- James Nachtwey

The pictures on display were selected from the International Committee of the Red Cross's collection of more than 110,000 photographs.

For all questions concerning the specific action of the ICRC you can contact Michelle Rockwell, ICRC Public Relations Officer (Tel: + 41 22 730 24 12 – E-mail: [mrockwell.qva@icrc.org](mailto:mrockwell.qva@icrc.org)).

## **2. WHY HOLD THIS EXHIBITION?**

Photography documents the reality of war and is essential for improving people's understanding of current and past events. It is through photography that most of us who have not directly experienced war get an idea of the pain it causes. While the written word can describe the suffering of people experiencing war, a photo adds another dimension evoking compassion and shaping public perception.

The ICRC possesses an uninterrupted visual record of wars during the past century and a half and of the humanitarian activities of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement from its inception to today. Forty-one images from its archives were selected for the exhibition, which takes the viewer on a chronological journey of some of the world's most tragic events.

The exhibition format mirrors that of the book *Humanity in War*, which was published last year to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Red Cross Movement. It also features new multimedia clips that provide insights into current conflicts. Like the book, the exhibition explores the main fields of humanitarian action: providing medical aid for the wounded, protecting prisoners, restoring family links, and assisting civilians.

As the famous war photographer James Nachtwey points out in the book's introduction, photographs can become an element in the process of change. Nachtwey argues that solutions to wars begin with shared awareness and that once people become engaged, solutions become possible. This photo exhibition is designed to increase awareness of the reality of armed conflict and to inspire action to mitigate its effects.

### **Why hold this exhibition at the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum?**

Complementing the Museum's permanent collection, the *Humanity in War* exhibition lays out the full spectrum of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's activities around the world. The challenges that the Movement faces – and how they have evolved over time – provide insights into its rich history.

*Humanity in War* reflects the Museum's ambition to examine these challenges through different perspectives. With each exhibition, the Museum seeks to encourage debate, stir emotion and provoke reflection on the nature of humanity. By providing a chronological display of warfare and other violence it shows that while the contexts may change, the suffering of men, women and children is constant. The photos not only give a glimpse into the lives of the people affected, they also prompt a number of questions, many of which have no easy answers.

The Museum, like its Movement partners, is committed to giving a platform to victims of wars and natural disasters so that they can speak out about their plight. Its exhibitions depict acts of human solidarity in such a way as to inspire hope. Visitors to *Humanity in War* will see not only the grievous consequences of armed conflict but also brave acts of humanity that inspire all of us to support those around us who need our help.

### **Why this title?**

The title, *Humanity in War*, was selected to emphasize the people caught up in the tragedy of war and humanity's ability to respond with selfless acts of compassion even amid its brutality.

Rather than depict the slaughter of war, the images bring to life the pain and anguish of men, women and children who have endured war's hardships. They show humanity coping with the trauma of war as well as efforts to alleviate suffering.

### **About the topic**

The exhibition uses still photographs and video images to illustrate the impact of armed conflict. When selecting the pictures from the book, *Humanity in War*, the ICRC looked firstly at the quality of the images since many of them were very old and taken in the infancy of photography. The organization then selected those that were most powerful and which would stand on their own, telling a story. The ICRC chose images that represented important milestones in both the history of warfare and the Movement's work.

For the multimedia clips, the ICRC combined both photographs and film to tell the stories of men, women and children who suffered the effects of current conflicts, emphasizing some of the consequences including separation of families, internal displacement and sexual violence. In addition, they show how the Movement seeks to help, for example through the ICRC's limb-fitting and rehabilitation centre in Afghanistan or through the work of a Haitian Red Cross volunteer.

The exhibition depicts the horrors of trench warfare, internment, famine and internal displacement, the recruitment of child soldiers, the impact of sexual violence, and people mourning the loss of their loved ones. It also shows relief parcels being prepared for detainees, families receiving news of loved ones, children being reunited with their families, and people overcoming their disabilities.

Some photos were taken by professional photographers, others by ICRC staff carrying out their humanitarian work in the field. The ICRC's policy on photographing its work has always been based on whether a picture could help the victims of war and other situations of violence.

### **Exhibition partners**

**The International Committee of the Red Cross:** The ICRC photo collection maintained by the organization's Library and Research Service contains some 110,000 items covering armed conflicts and ICRC operations from the 1860s to the present day. This is one of the largest collections held by a humanitarian organization.

**VII photo agency:** VII derives its name from the number of founding photojournalists who, in September 2001, formed this collectively owned agency. Designed from the outset to be an efficient distribution hub for photojournalism, VII has been responsible for creating and relaying to the world many of the images that define the turbulent opening years of the 21st century.



*Reminder:*

From 16 March to 14 August 2005 (extended until 15 January 2006), the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum played host to the exhibition entitled *WAR. The United States, Afghanistan, Iraq*, produced by the VII Agency.

From 23 September 2009 to 24 January 2010, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum presented the exhibition *Modest, portraits and stories of women in the Middle East*, in partnership with the VII Agency.

**Personal accounts**

The exhibition also includes moving interviews of people in different countries and diverse backgrounds in France, Lebanon and Kenya who were invited to select a photograph from the book *Humanity in War* and provide a personal perspective on the image or the context.



### **3. EXHIBITION LAYOUT**

#### **Overview**

As visitors enter the room they find themselves surrounded by photographs depicting people affected by war and those trying to help.

The photos lining the walls around the exhibition are organized by time period, as in the book *Humanity in War* upon which this exhibition is based.

- Chapter one: 1860-1918
- Chapter two: 1918-1939
- Chapter three: 1939-1945
- Chapter four: 1945-1970
- Chapter five: 1970-1980
- Chapter six: 1980-1990
- Chapter seven: 1990-2000
- Chapter eight: 2000 and beyond

The centre of the exhibition area contains a rectangular space where information on the photos is included in the form of personal accounts. These narratives are presented separately so that visitors can see them without their attention being distracted by the photos.

The exhibition concludes with eight short multimedia clips on contemporary conflicts featuring images taken by photographers from the VII agency.

#### 4. EVENTS IN QUESTION

Photos from the following contexts taken of people suffering the effects of armed conflict or providing assistance, both during the fighting and after it stopped, are featured in the exhibition:

1860-1918	American civil war Franco-Prussian war World War I
1918-1939	Greco-Turkish war Spanish civil war
1939-1945	World War II
1945-1970	Biafra conflict Korean war Yemen conflict Vietnam war
1970-1980	Viet Nam war Arab-Israeli conflict Zimbabwe independence struggle
1980-1990	Uganda armed conflict Ethiopian civil war El Salvador civil war Iran-Iraq war
1990-2000	Bosnian war Cambodia civil war Rwandan genocide and conflict Afghanistan war
2000 and beyond	Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict Liberian civil war Sudan conflict Iraq war Israel-Lebanon war Sri Lankan civil war Conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory

#### **Contemporary conflicts in eight multimedia clips**

Video images and photos from eight conflict-affected countries are brought together in short, four-minute clips capturing the strength, pain and humanity of people who have suffered the consequences of war or other violence.

Afghanistan: *Sorrow beyond Words*. This collection of black and white photos offers a glimpse of the human cost of war showing detainees in a prison, patients in a shelter for the destitute or mentally ill and mine victims being fitted with new limbs. Photos by James Nachtwey.



Colombia: *Broken Lives*. In rural Colombia anti-personnel landmines continue to maim and kill people. Francisco, aged 21, lost his foot to a landmine and is recovering in hospital. His life is shattered. Photos by Franco Pagetti.

Liberia: *Trauma Healing and Reconciliation*. Along with their children, the women of Liberia have borne the brunt of 14 years of war, enduring trauma beyond imagination. Women share their experiences with each other in an effort to deal with past traumas and current hardships. Photos by Christopher Morris.

Georgia: *Pomna Tsalani*. Two thousand Georgians living in Upper Kodori Gorge, an area of Abkhazia controlled by Georgia, fled when Russian planes bombed the area in August 2008. Pomna Tsalani, 70, describes their flight and settlement into a collective centre in Kutaisi. Photos by Antonin Kratochvil.

Haiti: *Providing a Lifeline to the Sick and Wounded*. Even before the recent earthquake, victims of violence in Haiti's shantytowns were among the poorest of the poor and were all too often forgotten. Jude Celoge is a Red Cross volunteer who evacuates the sick and wounded from the slums and makes life-or-death decisions, often while negotiating with gang members. Photos by Ron Haviv.

Lebanon: *Hasniyye Yehia Tawiyyeh*. Living the nightmare of displacement, Hasniyye, 61, tells of her struggles. She was forced to leave her home without her belongings, money or food. She grieves for the loss of her husband and of her son, who died during the fighting in 2007. Photos by Franco Pagetti.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: *Mama Bona and Ozias Kambale Pimo*. In 2008, hostilities escalated in the DRC. Over 250,000 civilians were forced to flee. In the chaos, families were dispersed and children lost. Mama Bona, a Red Cross volunteer, describes her commitment to looking after unaccompanied children. Eleven-year-old Ozias tells of his journey after being separated from his family. Photos by Ron Haviv.

The Philippines: *Bearing Witness*. These images show the hardships of some of the country's most vulnerable people: detainees and those displaced by conflict. Photos by James Nachtwey.

### **Personal accounts**

The personal reflections regarding photos from the *Humanity in War* book are included from the following contexts:

- World War II
- El Salvador civil war
- Viet Nam war
- Liberian civil war
- Zimbabwe independence struggle
- Rwandan genocide and conflict
- Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict
- Ethiopian civil war/famine



## **5. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN WORK**

The nature of humanitarian work has changed dramatically since 1859, when Swiss businessman Henry Dunant cared for wounded and dying soldiers left behind following the battle of Solferino in Italy. This event inspired his idea to create national relief societies recognizable by their common emblem, and an international treaty to protect the wounded on the battlefield. A permanent committee – now the ICRC – was established in Geneva to further Dunant's ideas.

It had not been the ICRC's intention to take action on the ground. However, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of countries in conflict – viewed as too close to the authorities – asked the ICRC to send its own relief workers, understanding that their neutrality and independence would enable them to gain access to the victims. The ICRC therefore had to build up operational activities very quickly and work on all sides of the battlefield.

Initially the ICRC focused on helping wounded soldiers, but over time it extended its activities to cover all victims of fighting. At the battle of Solferino in 1859, which was fought between well-structured armies, only one civilian was killed. Today, wars are rarely fought by armies facing each other on a geographically defined battlefield, and countless civilians bear the brunt of hostilities.

Humanitarian work has adapted and responded to the changing nature of warfare, extending well beyond the battlefield. The ICRC visits prisoners of war and detainees; searches for missing persons; forwards messages to family members separated by conflict; reunifies dispersed families; and provides food, water, and medical assistance to civilians who would otherwise not have access to these basic necessities. In addition, it spreads knowledge of humanitarian law and monitors its compliance.

### **“New conflicts”**

The ICRC has worked to develop and promote international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. Under the Geneva Conventions, States gave the ICRC the responsibility of monitoring the faithful application of international humanitarian law. One of the organization's greatest challenges is to ensure that the rules of war are respected.

It is often difficult to classify whether conflicts around the world could generally be classified as either international wars or as civil wars. Contemporary conflicts are characterized by their diversity.

Many of today's contemporary wars tend to be asymmetric, where combatants have different military capacities, and to take place in urban areas. The distinction between civilians and combatants is not always clear or respected. Civilians in these circumstances are especially vulnerable to violations of humanitarian law including murder, forced disappearance, torture and sexual violence.



The enforcement of humanitarian law is clearly more difficult in this type of conflict. Confrontations often become extremely brutal – and the rules largely ignored – where there is a lack of discipline among combatants, where civilians are armed, and where the distinction between combatants and civilians becomes increasingly blurred. In situations such as these, the ICRC seeks to ensure awareness of humanitarian law so that civilians will be spared and protected.



## **6. ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

### **Guided group tours**

Information and reservations:

Tel.: +41 22 748 95 06

### **Free guided tours**

(no reservation required)

Sundays 7 March, 28 March, 25 April and 30 May 2010, at 11 a.m.

### **Special visit**

ICRC delegates speak

Sunday, 18 April 2010 at 11 a.m. and 2.30 p.m.

### **School groups (reservation required)**

Tour of the exhibition and the ICRC photography archives, for teachers:

Monday 8 March from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Wednesday 10 March 2010 from 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Class tour in the presence of ICRC delegates:

Monday 22 March 2010 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Educational aids

Information and reservations:

Tel.: +41 22 748 95 06

[www.micr.org/edu](http://www.micr.org/edu)

### **Complete programme of events**

[www.micr.org](http://www.micr.org)

Editors' note:

The whole collection of ICRC photos is now digitalized and available in electronic format for users both inside and outside the organization. The Library & Research Service is opened to public and enquiries are welcome. [cid.gva@icrc.org](mailto:cid.gva@icrc.org)