



Photo: © Amnon Gutman / ICRC

Only half of Britons now believe that civilians should never be targeted in wartime, down from seven out of 10 eight years ago, according to a survey commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

The 'People on War' survey, conducted by pollster ICM on behalf of the ICRC, questioned 1,000 people about

their attitudes to issues such as the treatment of prisoners of war and acceptable tactics in warfare.

"At first glance, it is indeed worrying that the belief in the sanctity of civilians from military action seems to have dropped so dramatically in just eight years," says ICRC director of communication Yves Daccord. "However, when given specific scenarios, we see that the British public still strongly believes that there are boundaries in war which should not be crossed."

When respondents were asked about taking civilian hostages, some 85 per cent were opposed, up from 76 per cent in 1999. Four-fifths of those polled said prisoners of war should not be subjected to torture, even if to obtain important military information.

Worryingly, there is much lower awareness of the Geneva Conventions among young people. Some 61 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds knew about the Conventions, compared with more than 90 per cent in all other age groups.

Copies of the survey can be obtained from the ICRC in London (020 7877 7581) and by visiting [icrc.org](http://icrc.org)

## HIV: What's the story?

As one of the UK's leading humanitarian organisations, the British Red Cross has been supporting people living with HIV since the mid-1980s. But a recent survey commissioned by the British Red Cross revealed startling results. For example, one in seven young people in Britain would not be willing to remain friends with someone if they had HIV and just 57 per cent have received information about how to prevent the disease.

Red Cross programmes in several countries, including the UK, are reducing stigma surrounding the disease, educating people on HIV prevention and caring for people who are affected. But there is still a great deal of work to be done.

To coincide with World AIDS Day on 1 December 2007, the British Red Cross launched an online campaign called 'HIV: What's the story?' featuring videos, quizzes and stories highlighting the effect of the HIV pandemic on young people. Videos of three British characters, all



Photo: © Ajay Verma / Reuters courtesy www.aetna.org

affected by HIV in different ways, tell their stories based on real experiences and visitors to the site are encouraged to express their own attitudes and opinions.

The videos were the main draw to the website ([redcrosshiv.org.uk](http://redcrosshiv.org.uk)) during the weeks surrounding World AIDS Day and also proved popular on social networking sites Bebo and Facebook. On World AIDS Day alone, the campaign's pages on Bebo recorded an incredible 26,000 hits.

## Two thousand homes for tsunami survivors

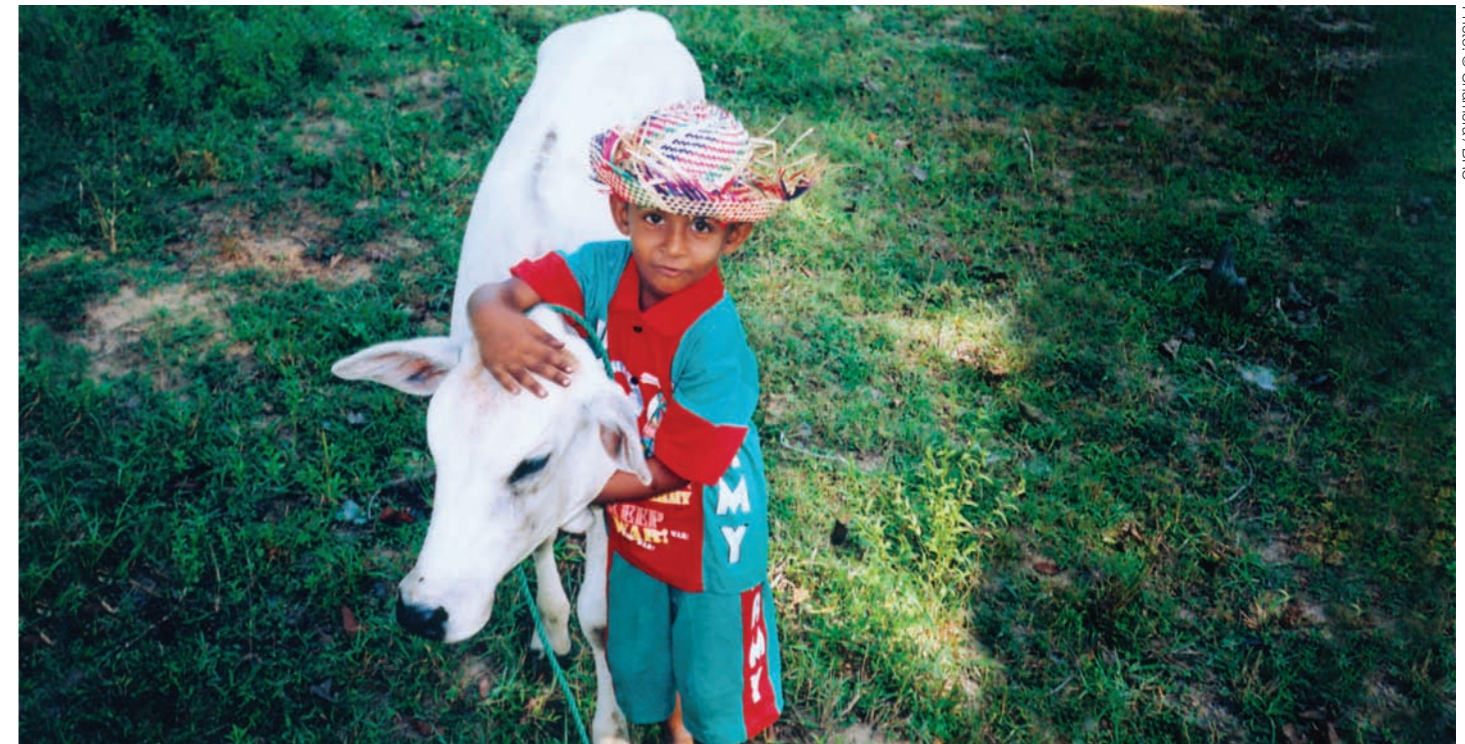


Photo: © Chamera / BPC

The British Red Cross marked three years since the Asian tsunami with the completion of houses in Indonesia and a major exhibition in London of photographs taken by survivors.

An official ceremony to mark the construction of more than 2,200 houses in Indonesia, built by the British Red Cross and Indonesian Red Cross, took place in December.

Dave Mather, British Red Cross head of programmes in Indonesia, spoke at the presentation of the houses in 12 villages in Teunom, a sub-district of Aceh Jaya.

"This is a major milestone in the recovery of the tsunami survivors in Teunom and for the Indonesian Red Cross and the British Red Cross in their tsunami recovery programme," he said.

"A large-scale and ambitious project such as this is not without its challenges, but we are delighted to be able to hand over the keys of these high quality new homes to so many families."

Around 230,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands injured or made homeless when the massive tsunami struck off the western coast of Sumatra, Indonesia on 26 December 2004.

To mark the third anniversary, the British Red Cross organised an exhibition of photographs taken by survivors who have been helped by the organisation.

'Tsunami: face to face' was opened on 5 December 2007 by Shahid Malik MP, minister for humanitarian affairs, at the [gallery@oxo](mailto:gallery@oxo) on the South Bank in London.

He said: "These are some really remarkable and powerful images. I pay tribute to the Red Cross for the enormous response they delivered and for the thousands of families they supported in the aftermath of the tsunami. In my humble view, it's the world's first emergency response network."

For more information please contact Corinne Evans, public affairs adviser, on 020 7877 7051, at [corinneevans@redcross.org.uk](mailto:corinneevans@redcross.org.uk) or visit [redcross.org.uk](http://redcross.org.uk)

## Prepared for the unexpected

The British Red Cross not only responds to emergencies but helps people prepare for them as well. A new survey reveals only three per cent of people in the UK are adequately prepared for an emergency, so the British Red Cross recently launched a dedicated online resource to help people prepare for emergency situations.

The 'Prepare for the unexpected' website, sponsored by the Brit Insurance Charitable Trust, contains tips and information on how to prepare for many types of emergency, ranging from common personal crises to national emergencies like flooding.

If your home is at risk of imminent flooding, you can visit the website for useful tips such as: check the radio and TV for updates; move vehicles to higher levels; and alert neighbours, particularly elderly or vulnerable people. It also suggests you take photographs before you evacuate your home or business, which could prove useful with insurance claims. And after the flood has happened and you return to your home, it alerts you to the possible risks and dangers you could still face.

Red Cross experts answer questions from the public via the website, which also contains quizzes and emergency contact lists for both homes and businesses.

The recent Red Cross survey shows only three per cent of people in the UK have taken the five necessary steps to prepare for an emergency, despite 68 per cent believing they are prepared. The survey assesses how many people meet the Red Cross' five basic tenets of emergency preparedness: first aid training; owning a first aid kit; having a working torch; having a working smoke alarm; and having a hard copy of emergency contacts.

Tony Thompson, head of emergency response at the British Red Cross, said: "Most people go through life with a 'this will never happen to me' attitude, but as recent floods in the UK have shown, it is not only personal emergencies that we should all be prepared for. This online resource will give the public jargon-free information on how to prepare for emergencies and cope with them."

Visit the website at [redcross.org.uk/prepare](http://redcross.org.uk/prepare)



Photo: © Layton Thompson / BHC

## Flood grants reach those in need



Photo: © Derek Pearce / BHC

Local charities and authorities have been distributing funds raised by the Red Cross' UK Floods Appeal.

Flooding in the summer of 2007 was the worst seen in the UK for decades and prompted an incredibly generous outpouring of support from the public. The UK Floods Appeal raised nearly £5 million, which, it was decided, should be allocated to those in need by local charities and authorities, as they know their areas best.

Most authorities are giving individual grants to people in their areas based on how severely they were affected by flooding and how vulnerable they are. For example, the Red Cross has allocated more than £250,000 to help Oxfordshire residents who are still suffering from the impact of the flooding, particularly the elderly, disabled people, those on state benefits and lone parents.

Some authorities are also using funds for specific projects. For example, East Riding of Yorkshire Council is spending £150,000 to repair two children's play areas damaged in the floods.

Margaret Lally, head of UK service development at the Red Cross, said: "Many people continue to face difficulties resulting from the damage to their homes and livelihoods. The stress of dealing with these problems also has an impact on people's lives.

"The public's generosity to our appeal will enable local organisations on the ground to help those most in need. These grants complement the other schemes which have made money available to help communities recover."

## News in brief

### Bangladesh recovery plan

The British Red Cross is working in Bangladesh to help some 6,000 people rebuild their homes and restore their livelihoods following the devastating cyclone in November, which claimed more than 3,300 lives.

The British Red Cross delivered relief, including food, blankets and tarpaulins, to more than 100,000 families affected by the cyclone.

The Bangladesh Cyclone Appeal raised more than £600,000 and a very generous £5.7 million was raised through the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal.

The British Red Cross will use part of the funds to employ carpenters and masons to train the community in house building to ensure more resilient homes are built.



Photo: © Aminul Rajiv/ Red Cross

### Flood heroes recognised

John Healey MP, floods recovery minister, invited 300 'flood heroes', including a number from the Red Cross, to a reception attended by the Prime Minister in December.

One of the Red Cross volunteers, Mark Kibble, said: "I felt proud to be there and to represent my colleagues from the Red Cross who worked so hard during the floods. I was just pleased to be able to help."

And in November, British Red Cross volunteers were among the Gloucestershire flood heroes honoured for their achievements at the Fire and Rescue Service annual awards ceremony.

At a special presentation Gloucestershire Media also recognised the Red Cross and other agencies who worked to save the county from the rising waters.