The scope of the “People on War” project was unprecedented in its geography, methodology and diversity. The International Committee of the Red Cross set out to explore wars on five continents, with countries whose citizens had been at war for anywhere from just a few years to more than three decades. The ICRC chose a diverse group of countries and regions, each of which offered unique logistical and political challenges. In some nations, simply negotiating the right to conduct research took many months, and authorities allowed only ICRC staff into their countries. In others, negotiations failed. In still others, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, the constant state of war itself had prevented researchers from collecting data for 20 years or more.

“People on War” required a wholly original approach to multinational research in developing nations. For financial and practical political reasons, the ICRC and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research (GQR) determined from the beginning that staff members and volunteers from national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies would conduct the face-to-face surveys. GQR staff held two-day training sessions with ICRC staff in each area on conducting survey interviews and recruiting focus groups.

Continued on page 37