

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

### Rwanda

Under the title "The action of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Congo and Rwanda" the International Review published last month an article on ICRC relief work at the request of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It described events up to the end of November 1967.

In December, ICRC action changed to meet the new turn of event. The Congolese authorities alone repatriated the former Katanga gendarmes without asking the ICRC to participate. By the end of December, only the mercenaries were left in the camp in Rwanda. The ICRC delegate at Kigali continued providing them with food and medical assistance.

On December 23, another ICRC doctor-delegate left Geneva, bearing the following message from the ICRC President to the Head of the State of Rwanda.

*Informed of talks which have taken place in Kampala between States concerned in the position of the mercenaries from Bukavu, the ICRC has the honour to address your Excellency so that a solution may soon be found which, whilst taking into account the legitimate desire of African States to prevent the return to Africa of persons liable to threaten their security, may ensure the final repatriation of the mercenaries having taken refuge in your country. Only such a solution can, according to the very terms of the OAU resolution of September 13 "éviter aux générations présentes et futures le fléau des haines et des conflits raciaux". Referring to the communication made to you by our delegate on November 8 we consider it necessary to recall again the principle that extradition to the Congo of the Bukavu refugees would*



Loading at Hanover of units of a field hospital being sent by the ICRC to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Photo W. Hauschild, Hanovre



Artist's impression of the 60 bed field hospital consigned to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

*be in contradiction not only with the spirit of the OAU resolution mentioned above and with undertakings then given by the President of the Congo, but also with the permanent principles of international law these men having to be regarded as political refugees. In addition it should also be remembered in this connection that the mercenaries have accepted to lay down their arms with the strong hope of preserving their lives and of being repatriated. The ICRC, which has neglected no effort to ensure the peaceful evacuation stipulated by that resolution, remains prepared to offer its help in realizing a humanitarian solution to that problem. The ICRC, which has every confidence in your high sense of justice and your respect for permanent moral values which you have always defended, knows that it can count on your Excellency's deep comprehension to ensure such a solution will prevail.*

## **Nigeria**

The International Committee of the Red Cross has recruited a relieving medical team for the hospital at Agbor to the East of Enugu on the main road half-way between Benin and Asaba.

This team is Swedish, consisting of Dr. Hans Christman Ehrström, general practitioner and two male nurses and has relieved the Norwegian team, headed by Dr. Kaare Sandnaes and placed at the ICRC's disposal last October to work in Nigeria.

Engaged for two months' service, the Swedish team was in position on December 9.

It should be recalled that a Swiss medical team was installed on November 17 by Dr. Erwin Spirgi at the Achi hospital in East Nigeria. This is composed of Dr. Jean-Paul Evard, head doctor, Dr. Georges Muheim, surgeon and Dr. Robert Lorge.

## **Vietnam**

The International Committee assembled in Hanover all the parts of a 60-bed field-hospital for despatch to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi. The main items,

consisting of a prefabricated Clinobox and a container convertible into a waiting room, were supplied by a firm in Hanover/Buchholz.

In addition, the field-hospital includes tents for an X-ray theatre, a laboratory, medical personnel, patients and stores, as well as a power generating unit and a Berkefeld water reconditioning plant. Complete with all the necessary surgical equipment and instruments, the hospital can be made operative within a few hours of its arrival.<sup>1</sup>

The whole consignment, weighing 15 tons, left Hanover on December 20, 1967 on two railway trucks for Vladivostok via the Trans-Siberian Railway. It will then be shipped to Haiphong. The Russian transport company "Souzvneshtrans" and the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Moscow have generously offered their assistance to ensure that things go according to plan. The consignment is expected to arrive in Haiphong towards the end of January.

A great number of donors wishing to aid the victims of air-raids on North Vietnam have contributed to this undertaking, through their donations to the ICRC.

## Near East

*ICRC acts as neutral intermediary between Israel and Jordan for Christmas religious ceremonies in Israeli occupied Jordan.*—The International Committee of the Red Cross delegation in Israel acted as a neutral intermediary between Israel and Jordan in order to arrange an agreement similar to the earlier "Mandelbaum Agreement" and where by Christian Arab pilgrims could go to the holy places West of the Jordan at Christmas. The Israeli military authorities made the necessary arrangements.

*ICRC delegate interviews General Moshe Dayan.*—The delegate in charge of the ICRC mission at Tel Aviv, Mr. Laurent Marti, interviewed General Moshe Dayan on November 27, 1967.

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.* Loading at Hanover of units of a field hospital being sent by the ICRC to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Artist's impression of the 60 bed field hospital consigned to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Talks centred round the exchange of military and civilian prisoners. A number of questions relating to the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention—concerning the protection of civilians in occupied territory—were also broached.

Following this discussion the body of an Israeli pilot, recently shot down in Jordan, was returned and a number of Egyptian civilians from the Atlith camp and Egyptian prisoners of war were repatriated.

*Winter relief for refugee and displaced Arabs.*—With the approach of winter, the International Committee and the League considered it necessary to launch a further joint appeal to National Red Cross Societies for relief supplies to be distributed to refugee and displaced Arabs following the June 1967 conflict.

It might be mentioned, in this connection, that relief in Syria and West of the Jordan is being provided by the ICRC alone and in Jordan by the League. In Egypt relief is distributed to refugee and displaced Arabs by the Egyptian organization "Winter Aid" to which the ICRC has delivered stocks of clothing.

So far, the ICRC has distributed in Syria several hundreds of tons of supplies such as foodstuffs, clothing, medicines, cooking utensils, etc. On the West bank of the Jordan it has distributed fresh and powdered milk to various orphanages and institutions for children as well as to the population, in addition to canvas sheets, blankets and medical supplies.

ICRC delegates have also distributed relief material to some 5,000 Egyptian prisoners of war in the Atlith camp in Israel.

*ICRC assistance to the Red Crescent West of the Jordan.*—In accordance with article 63 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Israeli Government, the occupying Power in territory West of the Jordan, has authorized branches of the Red Crescent to continue their activities in that territory as in the past.

The ICRC delegation in Israel took particular interest in the activities on this territory of Red Crescent branches, which it visited on a number of occasions and with which it co-operates.

The ICRC's head delegate in Tel-Aviv, Mr. Laurent Marti, on December 10 and 11 attended Committee meetings held by Red Crescent branches working West of the Jordan.

Jordanian and Egyptian Red Crescent branches based in Jerusalem and Gaza respectively, are carrying on their humanitarian missions.

## Yemen

*ICRC expedition into Yemen desert.*—Towards the end of December, Mr. André RoCHAT, the ICRC's delegate-general for South Arabia and the Yemen, led a medical team comprising a doctor and three male nurses behind the lines of the Royalist forces in the Yemen. The team travelled through rough and dangerous territory in a region where earlier another ICRC delegate was seriously injured. The mission's objective is to bring treatment and medicines to the wounded victims of the renewed fighting. It is already known that many war wounded are dying in the Jauf desert without medical attention, as none but the slightly wounded can make their way to the ICRC's base in the north of the Yemen.

After this mission, Mr. RoCHAT will go to Sanaa to examine with the Republican authorities the humanitarian problems on their territory and how the ICRC can help to alleviate them.

*ICRC-WHO talks on the Yemen.*—The International Committee having expressed the wish that the World Health Organization be informed of the present medical situation in the Yemen, a discussion took place on November 17, on its initiative, at WHO headquarters in Geneva. Representatives of both institutions examined ways and means of continuing medical assistance in North Yemen.

In the course of 1967, ICRC medical teams have been working in the northern sector of the Yemen where the 700,000 inhabitants lead a hard life and are completely lacking in medical services.

These teams provided medical care and introduced preventive measures in a region difficult of access, where medical attention was a thing unknown and where the people suffered from the consequences of the war.

If, as may be hoped, peace and unity return to the Yemen in 1968, the ICRC's emergency action should be taken over by other organizations which assume responsibility for medical assistance in time of peace.

**Korea**

At the end of November, Mr. André Durand, delegate general of the ICRC, went to the Republic of Korea where he was authorized to visit, in prison, seven of the accused persons who have just been sentenced by the Seoul District Penal Court.

He enquired into detention conditions and the health of the prisoners. Following his visit, he reported his conclusions and suggestions to the authorities.

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**IN GENEVA****VICE-PRESIDENCY OF THE ICRC**

Mr. Frédéric Sordet continues to be Vice-President of the Committee for 1968, whilst Mr. Hans Bachmann has been appointed Vice-President for 1968 and 1969.

**PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL**

The International Committee of the Red Cross has formed its Presidential Council for 1968 as follows:

President, Mr. Samuel A. Gonard; Vice-Presidents, Mr. Frédéric Sordet and Mr. Hans Bachmann; members, Miss Marjorie Duvillard, Mr. Max Petitpierre, Mr. Roger Gallopin and Mr. Jean Pictet.