

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

AN APPEAL BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

On behalf of victims of the conflict in Laos

At the request of the Lao Government and Red Cross, the ICRC launched an appeal on January 26, 1968, with the League's full support, to National Red Cross Societies on behalf of victims of the conflict in Laos. This is the text of the appeal:

A. Civilian Population

According to the ICRC delegate on the spot working with the Lao Red Cross, a further 25,000 persons fled the fighting areas in the first fortnight of January, to make their way to the region of the Mekong basin. Most of them are now in the northern provinces of Houa-Khong, Luang-Prabang and Sayaboury. Many others have sought refuge to the South in the provinces of Savannakhet, Saravane, Attopeu and Sedone. Others again, less numerous, have reached Paksane and Thakek in the central provinces. It is estimated that 15 % of these refugees are men, 25 % women and 60 % children.

About a fifth of these displaced persons have found temporary shelter in pagodas, other public buildings, and in tents. Only in the South can the Vientiane government provide a ration of meat and rice, for in the North stocks have been exhausted.

The ICRC delegate has therefore reported that additional assistance was required. The most urgent needs are:

- 630 tons of rice (3 month requirement for 14,000 people)
- unspecified quantity of tinned meat
- 25,000 blankets

- 25,000 mosquito nets
- 25,000 straw mats

These articles can be purchased either locally or in Thailand.

B. Wounded and Sick

The ICRC delegate has reported 200 wounded casualties in the northern provinces and 300 in the other provinces. In keeping with its tradition, the ICRC is also endeavouring to send help to the wounded and sick in the northern and eastern provinces controlled by the Pathet-Lao.

Already on January 19 the Australian Red Cross, at the request of the Lao Red Cross and the ICRC, sent supplies of blood plasma to Vientiane. Present needs are for:—Dressing material—Antibiotics—Sulfamides—Anti-malaria drugs—Blood serum—Surgical kits.

In view of the urgency and transport difficulties, the ICRC makes a special point of urging National Societies to donate cash as a matter of priority, to enable local purchases to be made and the foregoing relief programme to be implemented without delay.¹

National Societies able to provide relief in kind are requested to contact the ICRC beforehand, informing it of the type and quantity of commodities they can make available. The ICRC will then give them the necessary directives for despatch.

The ICRC expresses its thanks beforehand to National Societies for their action on receipt of this appeal, and will be grateful if they will inform it of their intentions.

¹ Funds for the programme should be remitted to the Swiss Bank Corporation, Geneva, for account of the ICRC and with the reference "Laos".