

A MISSION IN ALGERIA

As is mentioned elsewhere in the *International Review*, the ICRC charged Mr. S. Gonard to examine the activities of its delegation in Algeria and to have an interview on that subject with the President of the Algerian Government, as had been agreed in February of this year.

In June 1963, Mr. Gonard, after having conferred with the head of the delegation, went to the places where the delegates of the ICRC have been carrying out their activities for the past three months, for the most part by teams of two delegates each. He was able to assure himself that, as regards visits to former harkis in detention and also concerning searches for persons missing since the "cease fire" of March 19, 1962, the delegation's activities are proceeding in a normal manner.

All harkis detained in civilian prisons have been visited by the delegates who have been able to speak with each one without witnesses. Out of 2,500 harkis visited, about 1,300 have expressed the desire to be transferred to France. Nominal rolls have been drawn up for the governments concerned. This return having been made, the ICRC hopes that a first batch of 300 harkis will shortly be able to be released, in accordance with statements recently made in Paris by Mr. Bentoumi, Keeper of the Seals, and Mr. de Broglie, Secretary of State. It hopes that some hundred detainees under 20 and over 60 years of age who also wish to go to France may be added to this first group.

In the event of the Algerian Government deciding to release this category of harkis, the ICRC, in accordance with its humanitarian rôle, has offered the services of its delegates, who could be entrusted with ensuring that such a transfer would be carried out under satisfactory conditions.

As regards places of detention, the ICRC, according to its custom, has regularly kept the appropriate Algerian authorities

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informed of the observations made by its delegates as a result of their visits. The latter's mission has moreover been facilitated thanks to the excellent contacts and the good relations which they have been able to have with Algerian Civil Justice officials.

As regards missing persons, lengthy and patient negotiations are being very actively pursued. The search for witnesses, relations and for those living in the same building in which the missing person resided is difficult as, since the events of 1962, the movement of the urban populations has been fairly intense, with the result that many traces have been lost. It will not be possible to give information on this subject until the whole of the tracing action has been completed.

The Vice-President of the ICRC has been able to observe the delegates' devotion and diligence, as well as the excellent relations which they maintain with the Algerian authorities, the representatives of France and with the population with whom they are in daily touch both in the towns and in the douars.

The French and Algerian Governments are kept regularly informed of the activities of the ICRC delegation in Algeria and of the progress of its work. To this end, the audience which President Ben Bella accorded to the Vice-President of the ICRC was most useful in determining the way in which the humanitarian work which has been undertaken may be satisfactorily accomplished.

Mr. Gonard has also informed Mr. Gorse, the French Ambassador, of the observations which he had made during his stay in Algeria with the ICRC delegation.
