

## THE ACTION OF THE ICRC IN CYPRUS

*Relief to the victims.*—The joint UN and ICRC action aiming at the easing of restrictions has proved effective at Kokkina, where the population had swollen from 600 to 1400. As a result, these two international organizations distributed supplies from their stocks, including blankets, and textile material provided by the Indian Red Cross.

Distribution of relief supplies from the American and Canadian Red Cross Societies was organized in other parts of the island by Mr. Max Stalder, ICRC delegate. He provided the Lefka hospital with medical supplies in accordance with a list drawn up jointly by the hospital doctors and Professor Jequier. He obtained official authority to convoy to their native villages 47 Turkish Cypriots who had been to Nicosia for medical treatment.

According to Turkish Cypriot estimates the total number of Turks in need is about 55,000. With the coming winter the plight of these people will certainly be aggravated. The ICRC has therefore appealed to a number of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to supply the material means of enabling assistance to be given to victims of the events on the island.

Thanks to a cash donation from the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic, the ICRC delegation in Cyprus was able to buy locally and deliver to the Turkish smallholders, vaccine for the prevention of an epizootic disease amongst cattle.

*Exchange of prisoners.*—At the instigation of the ICRC and after three weeks negotiation, two exchanges of prisoners took place on September 27 and October 4, concerning twenty-two persons.

*On behalf of detainees.*—Since the onset of events in Cyprus, the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose intervention on behalf of victims started on the 1st January, 1964, has been

able to ensure the release of 124 detained persons, i.e. 100 Turkish Cypriots and 24 Greek Cypriots. Furthermore, the ICRC, continuing its work to trace missing persons, has contributed to clarifying the fate of 302 Turkish Cypriots with whom their families had lost all touch. At the end of October, those who have disappeared numbered 208 Turks and 38 Greeks. The delegation is continuing its efforts to clear up these cases, but the chances of success seem small until complete peace has been restored.

*The leader of the Turkish community expresses his thanks.*—The beneficiaries of this action who are well aware of the difficult conditions under which the ICRC delegation has to work, have expressed their gratitude on several occasions. The leader of the Turkish community and vice-president of the Republic of Cyprus, Dr. Kutchuk, recently sent a letter to Mr. Max Stalder, head of the ICRC delegation, as follows :

“ I am writing to express my and the Turkish Community’s appreciation for the ceaseless efforts exerted by you and members of the International Committee of the Red Cross in arranging the release on the 26th September, 1964, of eight Turkish Hostages held by Greeks. .

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude for the valuable services rendered by the International Committee of the Red Cross in the tracing of hostages, in the distribution of relief materials, medicines etc., to the refugees, to the needy and the sick, and in general for all the help they have given to members of my community since the early days of the Greek onslaught, in keeping with the best ideals and principles of the Red Cross.

I am confident that through the good offices and unfailing efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, other urgent problems confronting the beleaguered Turkish Community (such as provision of sheds for housing refugees, blankets etc., before the forthcoming winter) will also be solved.”

### **Appeal to the Red Cross world**

These are the chief extracts of an ICRC circular sent on 12 October 1964, to National Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

and Sun Societies, concerning the activities and future possibilities of the ICRC in Cyprus:

*In response to an appeal by the two communities in conflict in Cyprus, the International Committee has been in action there since January 1964. The International Review of the Red Cross and the ICRC's Topical Red Cross News have made regular mention of the work accomplished by its delegation in Nicosia.*

*In this country, in which only dispersed elements of the former Cyprus Branch of the British Red Cross subsist, the International Committee of the Red Cross is an indispensable neutral intermediary and in a position, in its own sphere, to carry out the most varied activities.*

*It should be emphasized first of all, that the International Committee's delegation in Cyprus enjoys the confidence of both communities. Its delegates can in fact cross the Nicosia "green line" at any time of day or night and circulate freely in any region or locality of the island.*

### I. Visits to prisons

*In the most varied circumstances scarcely a day passes without a member of one of the communities falling into the other's hands. In certain cases, which have fortunately become rare, a person has disappeared without the enquiry, immediately opened at the International Committee's request, leading to a trace. In the majority of cases, however, persons are released after interrogation. It often happens though that they remain detained for a prolonged period during which legal enquiries are initiated.*

*In the latter cases, the Committee's delegates are without exception, invariably given the possibility of visiting places of detention, of seeing the persons arrested as often as necessary and, if this is required, to make medical examinations. Parcels of food and clothing which the delegates brought with them have never been refused. The delegates also facilitate family visits by transporting each week parents and relatives of the Turkish Cypriot detainees from the Turkish quarter in Nicosia to the Greek central prison.*

*On several occasions, after arduous negotiation, the International Committee's delegates have been able to arrange for the exchange of prisoners between the two communities.*

## II. Medical action

*As regards medical action, many problems, have also arisen through the movements which the Turkish Cypriots have had to make. There is a sufficient number of Turkish Cypriot doctors, one medical team of the Turkish Red Crescent having even reinforced them. It is however impossible for them to visit certain areas subjected to restrictions on circulation and supply. The Turkish Cypriot population in these areas, on the other hand, refuses to accept treatment from Greek doctors. Doctors of Turkish origin, therefore, limit their medical activities to the town centres in which they live and to Turkish Cypriot villages within their reach without having to cross Greek areas. This led to the International Committee deciding to strengthen its delegation in Cyprus by sending out two doctor-delegates. They have been given every facility to go wherever local doctors have been lacking and, thanks to their intervention, many cases have been dealt with in a satisfactory manner. An agreement has notably been concluded, by which several Turkish doctors have been authorized to visit their isolated compatriots, the sick in the forbidden zones being, moreover, evacuated under Red Cross control to the nearest Turkish hospital.*

*After the fighting which took place at the beginning of August, several National Societies sent pharmaceutical relief to the International Committee's delegation in Nicosia. This is immediately handed over to the two communities, taking the special needs of each into account. These donations, whose origin the Committee did not fail to stress, were received with gratitude.*

## III. Geneva Conventions

*The International Committee has worked to make the Geneva Conventions better known. At its request the protective emblem has been painted, or repainted, on several medical establishments and special identity cards have recently been printed for the use of protected personnel.*

## IV. Special cases

*It is difficult to imagine the often tragic consequences for a number of special cases, resulting from the ever more distinct watertight compartments existing between the two communities. To take one*

*simple example, a Turkish Cypriot, wishing to rejoin his family abroad, will often not dare to cross the Greek zone separating him from Nicosia Airport. He will, in fact, only make such a journey in a vehicle belonging to an International Committee delegate. This even applies to the Turkish Cypriot who leaves prison or hospital to return to his own village! Several problems of this nature are daily resolved with speed and humanity, so much so, that this has now become a wide-spread action.*

## **V. The Supplying of the Turkish population**

*In spite of the emergency and thanks to the United Nations' intervention, agricultural production does not appear to have decreased to any really alarming extent. Whilst the necessary foodstuffs are to be found locally, this does not however mean that the supplying of the Turkish community is thereby assured. Considerable numbers of displaced persons and unemployed (55,000 according to Turkish Cypriot estimates) have to be maintained by their community. For this it has to purchase or receive food and having done so, roads have to be opened to the circulation of these supplies, failing which they cannot reach villages in need.*

*In spite of the recent lifting, by the Cyprus Government, of restrictions on the supplying of certain strategic areas, all difficulties have not yet been overcome throughout the island. The representatives of UNO and the ICRC are making active efforts to have the free circulation of essential supplies re-established there where obstacles still exist.*

*So far, the Turkish Red Crescent has sent eight ships loaded with supplies to the Turkish community of Cyprus. At the cost of great difficulties this relief has, with one exception, been unloaded and distributed to the refugees and unemployed. Conditions in which this aid will be continued in the future, however, remain uncertain.*

*The financial reserves of the Turkish Cypriot community, which until now have enabled it to make food purchases locally, are becoming exhausted at a time when, with the approach of winter, needs will be most sorely felt.*

*From the information given above, it can be seen that the position of the refugees and unemployed is not at present as desperate as it was during the blockade; their conditions of existence remain, however,*

*precarious and subject to fresh complications. Whatever the issue of the conflict may be on the political level, a rapid and definite improvement of the situation can scarcely be expected during the coming months. Some assistance is therefore indispensable.*

*This assistance the International Committee, within the framework of its mission as a neutral intermediary, is prepared to pursue. It requires, however, the means to do so.*

*As mentioned above, there are sufficient quantities of foodstuffs on the island. On the other hand, the duty-free import of relief in kind encounters numerous complications. Finally, certain requirements sometimes assume unexpected forms, necessitating immediate aid of a particular sort. This was recently the case, for example, with a group of Turkish Cypriot small-farmers whose livestock risked decimation from the sudden outbreak of an infectious cattle disease. Thanks to funds which had just been placed at its disposal, the ICRC delegation was able to purchase immediately the necessary vaccines locally and thus prevent a sudden deterioration in the already painful conditions of existence of those concerned.*

*For all these reasons, the International Committee considers that in the present circumstances, only cash contributions would enable certain, rapid and effective aid to be brought to the victims of events.*

*It proposes to use the funds which may be entrusted to it, either by making local purchases of certain special kinds of urgent relief supplies, such as the vaccines already mentioned, or by the distribution of small allowances to persons deprived of all other resources, thus enabling them to purchase essential food or commodities themselves.*

*The conflict during which the two Cypriot communities have been opposing each other for the past ten months has resulted in great loss and much suffering. In liaison with the League of Red Cross Societies and in the spirit of the 34th Resolution of its Executive Committee, the International Committee therefore appeals to the sentiment of fellowship of the members of the Red Cross movement towards the distress caused by the emergency in Cyprus.*