

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

ICRC President's Mission in Mauritania

On the invitation of the Government of Mauritania to attend ceremonies commemorating the 15th anniversary of the country's independence, ICRC President Dr. Eric Martin, accompanied by Mr. P. Gaillard, Adviser, was in Nouakchott from 25 November to 3 December. The Mauritanian Red Crescent invited the ICRC President to acquaint himself with the Society's activities in Nouakchott and the provinces.

President Eric Martin was received in audience by the President of the Republic, His Excellency Moktar Ould Daddah, and by several ministers.

President Martin and Mr. Gaillard visited the Red Crescent's distribution centres and dispensaries in Nouakchott and in Tiguint, about 80 miles from the capital, and in Rosso, in the South. The activities of the National Society, which has 1,500 members in 21 local committees, are concentrated on distribution of relief to the victims of drought and on medico-social work through the dispensaries.¹

Angola

ICRC delegate general's visit. — The ICRC delegate general for Africa, Mr. F. Schmidt, was in Angola in November 1975. The purposes of his visit were to make contact with the authorities who have taken over and to make an assessment of ICRC action following Angola's accession to independence. In Luanda he met the Prime Minister of

¹ *Plate.*

the MPLA, with whom he discussed the problems relating to the continuation of ICRC activities, including the possibility of resuming relief flights. In December he arrived in Huambo for talks with the Prime Ministers of the FNLA and UNITA.

ICRC activities in the field are being carried on, in the form of visits to prisoners, distribution of relief items, tracing and medical care given to the civilian population.¹

Prisoners. — Between 2 October and 26 November 1975, ICRC delegates visited over 1,200 prisoners, of whom 165 belonged to the FNLA, 327 to the MPLA and 754 to UNITA.

From the beginning of October to 10 November, the ICRC DC-6 aircraft carried altogether 943 persons, including 530 exchanged or transferred military prisoners (454 belonging to the MPLA and 76 to UNITA armed forces).

Medical teams. — In October and November 1975, the medical teams made available to the ICRC by the French, Danish, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies, operating at Huambo (formerly Nova-Lisboa), Vouga, Dalatando and Carmona respectively, performed many surgical operations and gave thousands of consultations.

The Swiss surgical team in Carmona was particularly active with many operations to its credit during that period, while the greatest number of medical consultations were given at Dalatando.

Relief supplies. — At the end of November, the relief goods forwarded to Angola totalled some 300 tons, of which 220 tons of medicaments, foodstuffs and sundry items to a total value of 1.3 million Swiss francs were distributed by ICRC delegates throughout the country.

West and Central Africa

The ICRC regional delegate for West and Central Africa was on a mission taking him to several countries. He stayed some time in *Cameroon*, before proceeding to *Chad* and the *Central African Republic*. In each of those three countries, he met various government officials and Red Cross leaders, with whom he spoke on the question of disseminating the Geneva Conventions in universities and schools and among members of the armed forces.

¹ *Plate.*

The ICRC regional delegate then went to *Zaire* where he saw members of the Government and of the National Society. He next went to *Gabon*, where he met the authorities, and the people who are in the process of forming a Red Cross Society. Then he returned to Kinshasa. Another regional delegate is presently in the People's Republic of the Congo.

East Africa

The ICRC regional delegate for East Africa, in Uganda on 4 December 1975, was received in audience by the President of the Republic, Marshal Idi Amin Dada, who is also Chairman of the present session of the Organization of African Unity. He gave a detailed account of ICRC activities in Angola. President Amin displayed deep concern about the situation in Angola and expressed the wish to give support to the ICRC's humanitarian work on behalf of the victims. He also said he wanted to be regularly informed of ICRC action and of any difficulties it encountered.

A full picture was given by the ICRC delegate of the various other activities the ICRC was performing in Africa; he hinted, in particular, at the possibility of developing the traditional tasks of the ICRC in Uganda.

Latin America

Chile

The ICRC is continuing its activities in aid of detainees and their families in Chile.

In October, the ICRC delegates visited 27 places of detention, in which one thousand detainees were held under the control of the military authorities. Assistance to the amount of US\$ 9,000 was given to these detainees. In addition, medical supplies from ICRC stocks were distributed in 13 prisons.

Aid to detainees' families during the same month amounted to US\$ 21,500; 980 families in the provinces and 470 in Santiago were helped in this way. The aid consisted of gifts of necessities or money to buy food and clothing.

In November, about 1280 detainees were visited in sixteen places of detention. The aid supplied by the ICRC amounted to US\$ 4,700, not including medical supplies sent to nine prisons. In addition, more than 2,000 families of detainees received material aid from the ICRC to a total of US\$ 48,000.

In December the Santiago delegation continued its work of protection and assistance. We shall revert to this in our next issue.

During a mission by the delegate-general, all the delegates met to review the activities carried out during the year and to plan objectives for 1976.

Jamaica and Dominican Republic

The regional delegate for Central America and the Caribbean carried out a mission in Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

In Jamaica he met the leaders of the National Red Cross Society. He also had talks with the Minister for Youth and Development and with the chief of staff of the armed forces, with both of whom he discussed in particular the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions. He also met officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his stay in Kingston he visited three places of detention and saw some 400 detainees.

The ICRC delegate then went to the Dominican Republic to distribute medical supplies in prisons. Then he returned to the ICRC regional headquarters in Caracas, where he attended the Seventh National Convention of the Venezuelan Red Cross.

Bolivia and Peru

Continuing his mission, begun in Ecuador, the ICRC regional delegate for the countries of the Andes went to Bolivia where he had several talks at the headquarters of the National Red Cross Society. He conferred also with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior, the head of national security and the director of prisons.

He visited six places of detention in La Paz, Chonochocoro and Viacha, seeing a total of about 600 detainees, of whom about one hundred were detained for offenses or reasons of a political nature. At the end of each visit, he distributed supplies (medicines, blankets, mattresses, toilet articles, kitchen utensils, games, etc.), as well as personal gift-parcels for detainees whose families were far away. A programme to help needy families of detainees has been launched in collaboration



Venezuela: opening of the 7th National Convention of the Venezuelan Red Cross in Caracas (*from left to right, Mrs. de Alvarez, President of the Red Cross, Mr. Lee-mann, ICRC delegate, Mr. Lepage, Minister of the Interior, Mrs. B. de Perez, first lady of the Republic, Mr. Perez, President of the Republic*).

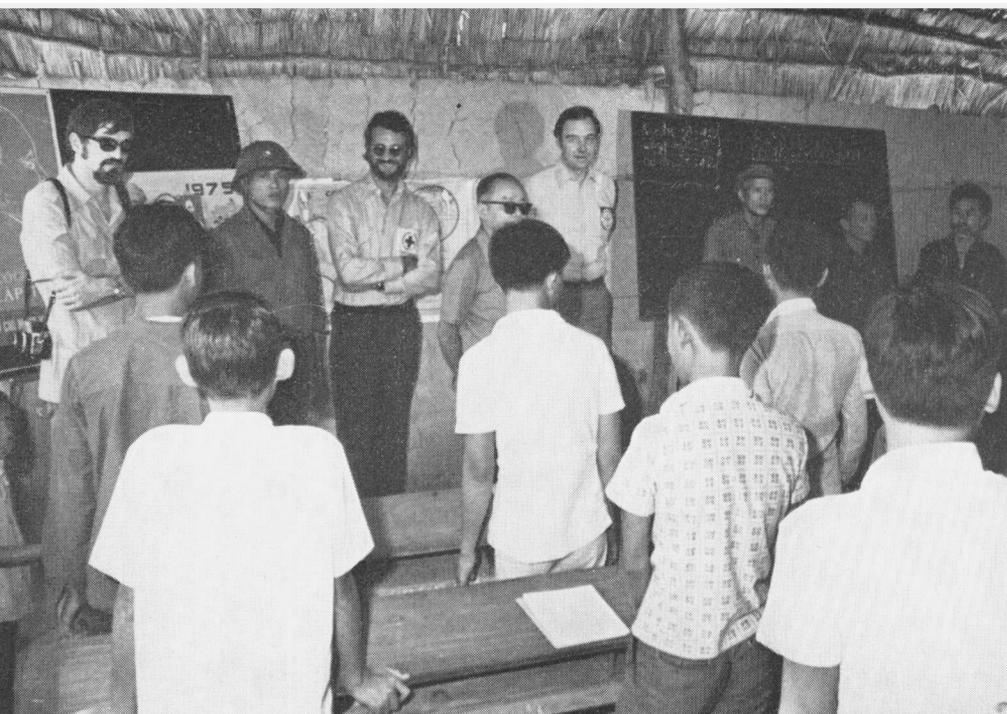
Mauritania: leading members of the Red Cross among children waiting to be treated in a dispensary at Nouakchott (*centre, left to right, Mr. Gaillard, ICRC Adviser, Mrs. Sall, President of the Mauritanian Red Crescent, Mr. Martin, President of the ICRC, Mr. Beer, Secretary General of the League*).





Mr. J. P. Hocké, director of the ICRC Operations Department (*centre*) helping at a distribution by the South Vietnam Red Cross of relief supplies provided by the International Red Cross, in a village...

... and, accompanied by the Secretary General of the South Vietnam Red Cross and two ICRC delegates, attending a first-aid class.





Chile: unloading ICRC relief supplies in the port of Valparaiso.

Photo Trumpy/ICRC

Angola: in the ICRC Central Tracing Agency in Luanda, the delegate in charge and a local employee deal with requests.

Photo J. J. Kurz/ICRC





Republic of Korea: Mrs. Sung Soon Yew, Mrs. Catherine M. Mackenzie, Bok Eum Kim, receive the Florence Nightingale Medal and the accompanying citation.

Libya: loading supplies at Benghazi during relief operations to Syria organized some time ago by the Libyan Arab Red Crescent.



with the Bolivian Red Cross, which is to carry it out. As a start, aid to a value of US \$ 500 has been distributed among thirty families.

In Peru, the regional delegate met leading members of the organizing committee of the Peruvian Red Cross and several officials of the Ministries of Health and of the Armed Forces, visited four places of detention in Lima and saw a total of 3,858 detainees.

Brazil

In November 1975 a series of visits to places of detention were made in Brazil. The regional ICRC delegate for the "Cono Sur", who spent July in states in the south of the country, visited ten prisons where he saw 2,560 detainees, in the states of Mines Gerais, Bahia and Pernambuco.

Venezuela

The seventh convention of the Venezuelan Red Cross was held in Caracas from 27 to 29 November. The opening address was delivered by Mrs. M. E. de Alvarez, President of the National Society, in the presence of the country's highest officials, as can be seen from the photograph published in these pages.

Another meeting in Caracas was that of the ICRC delegates for Latin America from 15 to 20 December.

Asia

Indo-China

At the invitation of the Red Cross Societies of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and of the Republic of South Vietnam, Mr. J.-P. Hocké, ICRC Director of Operations, went to Hanoi and Saigon to discuss the future activities of the International Red Cross in Vietnam.

Timor

The ICRC delegates and doctors in the eastern part of the Island of Timor are ready to continue their mission which has been interrupted by the military operation which took place. With a view to the resumption of ICRC activities, approaches were made to the parties in conflict.

The two Swiss delegates and the medical team of the New Zealand Red Cross, replacing the Australian medical team, went to Darwin on 20 December and were ready to go to Dili at a moment's notice, provided the parties to the conflict agreed to their doing so.

The ICRC medical team, with the local personnel, had been running the Dili hospital. The two Swiss delegates had been protecting and assisting the victims—particularly by visiting prisoners—in accordance with the Geneva Conventions.

The following press release was issued on 23 December 1975. The ICRC, whose mission in the eastern part of Timor was suspended on 6 December because of the events, is ready to resume its humanitarian work in aid of the victims of the conflict that has torn the country since August 1975.

To date, the ICRC has regrettably not received any reply to its offers to resume its activities in Timor, and more particularly in the hospital at Dili, which has no doctors.

The ICRC, which has been endeavouring since 7 December to approach the parties to the conflict via Djakarta and New York, is continuing its efforts. In Asia, ICRC delegates are also making attempts to get in contact with the newly-established authorities in Dili.

Asian sub-continent

In two earlier numbers, April 1974 and April 1975, the International Review described the vast repatriation and population transfer operation in the Asian sub-continent which enabled about 250,000 persons either to return to their native countries or to go to another country of their own choice.

In July 1974, this operation was discontinued. Since that time, some persons who had been prevented by personal reasons from taking part earlier in the transfer have asked for the assistance of the ICRC in migrating. When the validity of their requests is established, the ICRC undertakes the necessary steps with the countries of residence and of destination to obtain the required exit and entry visas. It provides ICRC travel documents to those who lack passports. In some cases, it also provides them with small sums of pocket money for the journey.

From January through December, 53 persons left India and 180 Bangladesh for Pakistan.

Following the massive transfers which took place during 1974, the repatriations continue on an individual basis, and the ICRC continues to provide assistance to various categories of persons wishing to move from one country to another.

Europe

Portugal

In December 1975, an ICRC delegate began a two-week mission in Portugal. On his programme was a third series of visits to places of detention, and the preparation, in collaboration with the Portuguese Red Cross, of a Christmas aid campaign for detainees and their families.

During his stay, he has continued discussion with the authorities and with the National Society of Portugal on other subjects of common interest, such as the sending of relief to Angola, the creation of a tracing service to find missing persons, and the reuniting of families separated by the events there.

Middle East

Student travel and family contacts. Four student travel and family contact operations took place under ICRC auspices in November, on the El Qantara road. In all, 910 people from the occupied territories of Gaza and the Sinai went to Cairo: 598 were Palestinian students registered in Egyptian universities; 298 were people paying visits to their families in Cairo; and 3 were released civilian detainees. In the opposite direction, of 367 people going to the occupied territories of Gaza and the Sinai, 364 were visitors, 2 students and 1 returning to his family. In addition, the body of a Palestinian student from Gaza, killed in an accident in Cairo, was returned to his homeland.

On 1 December, in a further operation, 49 people went from Cairo to the Gaza and Sinai territories for family visits and 234 went in the opposite direction to Cairo; 91 of them were pilgrims to Mecca.

Repatriation of dead Egyptian soldiers.—On 27 November, at UN Point 512 on the El Qantara road, the bodies of 92 dead Egyptian soldiers were repatriated to the Arab Republic of Egypt under ICRC auspices.

Repatriation of civilians.—On 1 December 1975, under ICRC auspices, a Lebanese civilian and an Israeli Arab civilian passed thorough Rosh Hanikra (Ras Nakura) under ICRC auspices, each to return to his own country.

Lebanon

In its previous issue the *International Review* mentioned that the ICRC had launched an appeal for US \$ 2,000,000. On 9 December, the ICRC published the following press release:

The situation has abruptly deteriorated in Lebanon where many new victims have fallen in the fighting.

The ICRC is alarmed at the turn of events and the attendant serious humanitarian problems. Its concern is increased by the fact that, in response to its appeal of 21 November to all governments and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, calling for 2 million dollars, it has received only 50,000 dollars. This is far short of the sum required to cover even the expenses incurred since the beginning of September for the relief operations carried out by a team of a dozen people and for the distribution of 125 tons of emergency medical relief to a value of 378,000 dollars.

It is essential and urgent that the necessary financial support be provided to enable the ICRC to continue its work for the benefit of all victims of the conflict.

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

An ICRC delegate was in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen from 25 October to 6 November. He had several contacts with government authorities and with representatives of the Red Crescent. He discussed with the government officials, among other things, the question of the signing of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

For two days he followed the activities of the young Red Crescent Society accompanying teams of voluntary workers in the second and third Governorates. He was in this way able to acquaint himself with the relief action undertaken for the benefit of the August flood victims, and to see the action undertaken in public health promotion. He gave three lectures on the principles of the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions.
