

## EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

### Angola

From 17 to 30 May 1973, a doctor and a delegate from the ICRC were in Angola. From 21 to 25 May, they visited the detention camp of São Nicolau, the military hospital, the Luanda prison and the Luso prison. They saw, in all, some 1,900 people detained for political reasons and they were able to talk with them in private.

After their visits, the delegates met the director general for security to whom they conveyed their observations.

The delegates also went to the districts of Moçamedes, Moxico, Huambo and Luanda. In each place they were received by the Governor, the military commander of the zone and the local authorities. In addition, they met the leaders of the district delegations of the Portuguese Red Cross.

### West Africa

*Niger*: One of the ICRC regional delegates for West Africa was in Niger from 15 to 26 May. He met the Minister of the Interior, the Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, and the Head of the Army Staff.

*Upper Volta*: In this country, where he stayed from 28 May to 2 June, he conferred with the Ministers of Defence, the Interior, Information and Youth. He had contacts also with the cabinet directors of the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs, and with the General Secretaries of the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs, with the General Directors of the Ministries of Health and Education, and with the Head of the Army Staff.

As in Niger, the regional delegate spoke on ICRC activities, the development of international humanitarian law and the dissemination of knowledge of that law in schools and in the armed forces.

*Mali*: Continuing his mission, one of the two ICRC regional delegates arrived in Mali on 6 June. He was received in Bamako by the Head of the State and conferred with the Ministers of Defence, the Interior, Justice, and Health, and with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

*Senegal*: The delegate arrived in Dakar on 9 June where he was met by leaders of the Senegalese Red Cross Society. He was received at government level by the Secretary General of the Presidency, the Director of the Minister of Foreign Affairs' Cabinet, and the Director General of the Ministry of Health. He also had talks with the Chief of Staff of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands).

*Central African Republic*: The other regional delegate was in the Central African Republic from 2 to 7 June. At Bangui he met the delegate of the Presidency and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior, Education and Health.

At the National Police School, he gave a lecture on ICRC activities and the Geneva Conventions. He conferred also with members of the committee of the emerging Red Cross society.

## **East Africa**

*Tanzania*: The ICRC regional delegate for East Africa was in Tanzania from 8 to 18 May. He had discussions with government authorities and with National Red Cross leaders. He met in particular the Minister of the Interior to whom he described ICRC activities.

*Madagascar*: On 18 May, the delegate went to Madagascar. In Tananarive, he was received by the Head of the Government and had talks with government officials and Red Cross leaders.

## **A Mission by the delegate-general for Latin America**

As already announced, the ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, Mr. S. Nessi, recently went on a several week mission in

the Caribbean. He first stayed from 4 to 9 June in the Bahamas, where he was received by the Governor and conferred with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Telecommunications and with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health. He met the leading members of the emerging Red Cross to whom he described the activities of the ICRC and he also visited the local committee on Exuma Island.

After participating in Jamaica from 10 to 23 June in the regional training institute organized by the League of Red Cross Societies, the delegate-general proceeded to Haiti.

## **Mexico**

The ICRC regional delegate for Central America and the Caribbean went to Mexico on 7 June 1973. He was met by and conferred with the present and leading members of the Mexican Red Cross Society. At government level, he talked with the Director General for Foreign Affairs and with the heads of the Departments of Education and Defence, with whom he broached the possibility of introducing into schools and into the armed forces courses on the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions by means of the school textbook and the "Soldier's Manual".

## **Venezuela**

The ICRC regional delegates undertook a series of visits to places of detention in Venezuela.

From 12 to 23 May they went to five prisons in Caracas: the Cárcel Modelo, the Internado Judicial de San Juan de Los Morros, the Penitenciaría General de Venezuela, the Internado Judicial El Junquito and the Reten de Catia. In all, they saw more than 5,000 detainees, some sixty of whom were held for political reasons. On 30 May, they went to the "Instituto de Orientación Femenina Los Teques", the "Colonia Penal El Dorado", the "Cárcel Nacional de Ciudad Bolívar" and finally "Centro Penitenciaría de Oriente". In every place of detention, the delegates talked with the detainees without witnesses.

## **Mission of delegate-general for Asia**

From 28 April to 26 May, the ICRC delegate-general for Asia and Oceania, Mr. J. Ott, went to four Asian countries to study current problems facing the ICRC. He first went to Bangladesh where he stayed until 8 May. In Dacca he was received in audience by the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister for Relief and Reconstruction. He also conferred with the President of the Bangladesh Red Cross Society.

The second stage of his voyage led him to Nepal for a working meeting with heads of delegations on the Asian sub-continent and the desk officers at ICRC headquarters. Then, from 14 to 21 May, in order to review ICRC activities in that part of the world, Mr. Ott was in Thailand, where he was joined by the ICRC regional delegate who is based in Kuala Lumpur. In addition, he met the Thai Red Cross director.

On 21 May, Mr. Ott went to the Philippines where he conferred with the Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and with National Red Cross leaders.

## **Republic of Vietnam**

On 30 May 1973, ICRC delegates in the Republic of Vietnam visited in the Bien Hoa camp prisoners of war captured since the cease-fire of 28 January 1973. The delegates talked in private with the prisoners.

## **Asian Sub-Continent**

### **Repatriation operations**

On 18 and 19 May 1973, two repatriation operations took place at the Indo-Pakistani frontier post of Wagah, under ICRC auspices.

An Indian civilian released by the Pakistani authorities was repatriated on 18 May. On the same day, the ICRC delegates in Pakistan, on behalf of the Pakistan Red Cross, handed their colleagues in India 25,000 parcels and 1,000 books for Pakistani prisoners of war.

The next day, fifteen sick Bengali military personnel crossed from Pakistan into India for repatriation to Bangladesh. They were examined by an ICRC doctor then taken by ambulances to the Indian hospital at Amritsar before going on by train to New Delhi. On 23 May they flew to Dacca.

### Family messages

In May 1973, more than a million Red Cross messages were transmitted between India and Pakistan by the offices of the Central Tracing Agency: 484,616 messages from families of Pakistani prisoners of war went to India and were distributed in prison camps whilst the 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war in India wrote 680,400 letters to their families.

These figures bring up to 11 million the number of messages transmitted by the ICRC since the end of December 1971 between prisoners of war and their families.

### Bangladesh

*Visits to prisoners of war.*—On 28 May 1973, the ICRC delegates in Bangladesh visited 75 Pakistani prisoners of war detained in the central prison at Dacca. As usual, they were permitted to talk in private with the prisoners.

*Release of a prisoner of war.*—On 22 June 1973, a sick Pakistani prisoner of war released by Bangladesh was repatriated under ICRC auspices.

*In the non-Bengali colonies.*—One of the tasks facing the ICRC delegation in Bangladesh is to watch over the living conditions and especially the sanitation of the non-Bengali minority which is concentrated in colonies, mainly at Dacca, Chittagong, Khulna, Ishurdi, Bogra, Rangpur and Saidpur. The sanitation in these colonies is often inadequate; this, coupled with the dense population, favours the spread of disease. To remedy the situation, the ICRC is having drainage systems and toilets installed in several camps. WHO teams contribute to this campaign by conducting large-scale vaccinations against smallpox and cholera.

Each colony has one or more dispensaries and maternity wards staffed in general by a doctor and three nurses. Each of these centres tends an average of some 6,000 patients a month. Treatment is given free. Medicaments are supplied by several organizations such as the Bangladesh Red Cross, UNICEF, WHO and ICRC.

The most frequently encountered ailments are gastro-intestinal disorders, skin diseases and tuberculosis. To combat the latter, detection and therapy drives have begun in several colonies.

### **India**

*Visits to prisoners of war.*—ICRC doctors and delegates in May visited seventeen prisoner-of-war camps and four hospitals. They saw more than 44,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and were able to talk in private with anybody they wished. Reports on these visits are transmitted to the Governments of Pakistan and India.

*Relief distributions.*—In May 1973, ICRC delegates in India distributed relief to prisoners of war and civilian internees in six camps. They delivered spectacles, books, musical instruments, games for children, fresh fruit, powdered milk and cigarettes. In addition, the “one fresh fruit a day” programme started by the ICRC for the children of interned Pakistani civilians continued; 4,454 children benefitted in May.

### **Pakistan**

The ICRC delegates in Pakistan, on 22 and 26 May, visited some 150 Bengali senior civil servants arrested by the Pakistani authorities in the last few weeks. These persons, with their families, were held in camps in Warsak and Qadirabad.

In addition, with a view to stepping up its humanitarian activities, the ICRC decided to increase the strength of its delegation in Pakistan to seven delegates. Their main task is to visit the Bengali communities regularly and to distribute relief supplies.

There are three categories of Bengalis: former members of the Pakistani army and their families; civil servants; other civilians. The assistance provided by the ICRC through local committees comprises essentially medicaments, food and small sums of money.

From 23 to 29 May 1973, ICRC delegates in Pakistan visited

three pre-repatriation camps at Quetta, one at Sandeman and one at Loralai, in which Bengali members of the Pakistani armed forces are interned.

### **Nepal**

From 8 to 14 May 1973, a seminar in Kathmandu was attended by the heads of ICRC delegations in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, and by Mr. J. Ott, ICRC delegate-general for Asia and Oceania, and Mr. F. Payot, desk officer in Geneva for the Asian sub-continent. This meeting permitted an exchange of information and discussion of current problems.

The ICRC representatives also visited the Nepal Red Cross. They were received by H.R.H. the Princess Princep Shah, President, and met the members of the Central Committee of the National Society.

Before returning to Switzerland, Mr. Payot went to India and Bangladesh to acquaint himself with the activities of the ICRC delegations.

### **Middle East**

#### **Repatriation of prisoners of war**

Three operations for the repatriation of prisoners of war took place in the Middle East on 3 June 1973 under the auspices of the ICRC.

In the first, three Israeli prisoners released by the Syrian authorities returned to Israel across the cease-fire line at Ahmedieh. On the same day, also at Ahmedieh, 46 Syrian prisoners released by the Israeli authorities were repatriated. In the third operation, at Ras Nakura, on the Israeli-Lebanese border, ten Lebanese prisoners returned to Lebanon.

#### **Visits to prisoners of war**

ICRC delegates in the Arab countries and Israel several times visited prisoners of war during the last few weeks. As usual they talked with them in private.

*In Israel*, 108 Arab prisoners of war (57 Egyptians, 41 Syrians and 10 Lebanese) were visited on 16 May 1973. The five Syrian officers were visited on 15 and 28 May. After the repatriation of the 46 Syrians and ten Lebanese on 3 June, there remain 57 prisoners of war in Israel. They were visited again on 5 June 1973.

*In the Arab Republic of Egypt*, the ten Israeli prisoners of war were visited on 19 May and 4 and 19 June 1973.

*In Syria*, the three Israeli prisoners of war saw the ICRC delegate on 15 May before their repatriation on 3 June 1973.

### **Family reuniting**

An operation for the reuniting of families took place on 21 May at El Qantara under ICRC auspices. It enabled 97 people from the Arab Republic of Egypt to join their families in the occupied territory of Gaza-Sinai. In the opposite direction, one Egyptian civilian returned to his country.

### **Israel and the occupied territories**

*Visits to the Libyan aircraft disaster casualties.*—The ICRC delegates in Israel, on 23 and 30 May, visited in the Beersheba hospital where they were still undergoing treatment the two survivors of the air disaster in the Sinai.

*Visits to civilian detainees.*—The ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories, from 6 March to 27 April, made their twenty-fifth round of visits to places of detention. They went to a dozen prisons and saw some 2,100 civilian Arab detainees. As usual, they talked in private with whoever they wished.

*Bus transport:* The ICRC continued providing bus transport for the needy families of detainees. Each month it thereby enables some 3,000 people to go to the prisons to visit interned relatives.

*Parcels:* Each month the ICRC distributes, to detainees who have had no family visit for three months, parcels containing fruit, biscuits, cigarettes and toilet articles. Some 500 detainees receive such a parcel each month.

## **Yemen Arab Republic**

From 10 to 16 April 1973, the ICRC delegate distributed relief to refugees in the regions of Bab-el-Mandab, Taiz and El-Baida, in the Yemen Arab Republic. With the help of some fifteen voluntary workers, he distributed 25½ tons of flour, 3 tons of powdered skimmed milk, and 1½ tons of sugar to about 1,000 people, including 314 young children. This food would suffice them for three and a half months.

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### *IN GENEVA*

## **Tunisian President at ICRC**

Whilst in Switzerland for the International Labour Conference, H.E. Mr. Habib Bourguiba, President of the Republic of Tunisia, on 25 June 1973 visited the headquarters of the ICRC, in response to the invitation which the President of the ICRC sent him last February.

President Bourguiba, accompanied by H.E. Mr. Slim, Permanent Representative of Tunisia in Geneva, and Mr. Ben Achour, Embassy Attaché, was welcomed by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, and by members of the Committee and of the Directorate. Dr. Fourati, President of the Tunisian Red Crescent, and Mr. Henrik Beer, Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross Societies, were also present.

After President Bourguiba had signed the visitors book, the two Presidents discussed in private the ICRC's work throughout the world, and particularly in the Middle East. On the occasion of his visit, President Bourguiba demonstrated his interest in the work of the ICRC by making a generous donation.

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