

The ICRC and the Civilian Detainees in South Vietnam

On 8 June 1973, the ICRC issued the following press release:

Whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross welcomed the signing of the Paris Agreement of 27 January 1973 on ending the war in Vietnam, it cannot but state publicly its concern for the civilian detainees who are still kept in confinement.

The ICRC has already published its 1972 decision to suspend its visits to these prisoners in view of the restrictions which were being enforced, impeding the delegates in the discharge of their mission.

It is now obvious that the provisions of the Paris Agreement concerning these prisoners are not being applied. The two South Vietnamese parties have even now not officially invited any National Red Cross Society to visit all places where detained Vietnamese civilians are held, despite the fact that they were required to do so within fifteen days after the cease-fire came into effect, in accordance with Article 9 (b) of the Protocol concerning detained persons. Furthermore, the period of ninety days (Article 8 (c) of the Agreement) for the settlement of the question of the return of Vietnamese civilian detainees has expired long ago.

In view of the failure to apply these provisions, the ICRC reminded the two South Vietnamese parties, namely the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam, on 2 April 1973, and now publicly reiterates its reminder, that it is prepared to resume visiting all places in South Vietnam where civilians are detained, provided its delegates are allowed freely to go where they wish and to talk privately with detainees of their choice in all places of detention, without restriction of any sort.