

ICRC ACTIVITIES 1974

As customary, the International Committee has published, for 1974, its Annual Report. The first six chapters give an account of the Committee's extensive and varied work during the year; the seventh is devoted to the ICRC's financial situation and the special funds which it manages. We reproduce below large extracts of the foreword signed by the President of the ICRC:

... We hope that those who have this report in their hands will not be content with a cursory glance but will study it carefully and acquire a consciousness of all that lies behind the restraint and dryness of the words: the sufferings, misery and blood of victims; and the total, un-sparing dedication of those working for the ICRC...

Today the ICRC can be said to hold a privileged place in the world, in relation to governments and to the United Nations which trust it for its impartiality and experience. No international organization is in a position today to think of taking its place, and the results it achieved in 1974 were such as to confirm this appraisal and strengthen its position.

A few moments given to the pages dealing with the ICRC's action in Cyprus, for instance, will make the reader aware of the multifarious duties we were called upon to fulfil, and enable him to assess the effectiveness of a resolute group of ICRC delegates in a war situation.

One should not delude oneself, however: the task that lies before our institution is today a difficult one owing to all the obstacles put in its way by politics. It often has to wage a relentless struggle to ensure

¹ *Annual Report 1974*, ICRC, Geneva, 1975, 120 pp. Available in English, French, German and Spanish, from ICRC, price Sw.fr.12.—.

the unqualified or unrestricted application of the Geneva Conventions.

In addition to this arduous action, conducted in chancelleries and in the field, the ICRC has a further duty: it must acquaint the world with its mission and maintain close contact with National Red Cross Societies. In this context, the relations which the ICRC President and the President of the Executive Board maintain with the National Societies are necessary. I have on various occasions had experience of the warm and deferential welcome extended to the President of the ICRC in the course of visits to Societies which do their utmost to ensure that those occasions shall be pleasant and fruitful. There is nothing that can dispel a misunderstanding better than personal contact and an exchange of views marked by frankness.

The need to expound the mission and the message of the ICRC to the world is all the more vital because young National Societies have to be supported and encouraged, while on the other hand some older Societies seek a tonic and revitalizing stimulus that will enable them again to spring into vigorous action...

... A widespread knowledge of humanitarian law and of the salient features of the Geneva Conventions must be developed at every level, at school, in the army and in the university, and this is not an easy matter. The presence of ICRC delegates and the work they perform throughout the world contribute effectively to the success of that effort.

The ICRC message must be persuasive and proclaimed uncompromisingly. It must reaffirm the impartiality and non-discrimination that govern the aid rendered to all victims. Some believe that the Red Cross should be imbued with a new spirit. This is doubtless true; but none of the basic principles must be called in question lest the whole structure should collapse.

We are used by now to the novel sight of International Conferences of the Red Cross, attended by young Societies which have come to life in new States. The ICRC is conscious of this transformation and welcomes it, for it shows that the concept is marching ahead. The ICRC lends an attentive ear to the new world, but it must watch over the sources and principles of the Red Cross. By doing so it believes that it is working for peace. The Red Cross builds a bridge between different ideologies, conflicting economic systems and countries still bruised by war; it calls for dialogue and seeks to restore confidence.

The future of the International Committee of the Red Cross is very clear: wherever there are victims of conflict it must be on the scene. It must pursue its action on behalf of political detainees. Armed with its right of initiative, it must be prepared to assume responsibilities in humanitarian action. Thus it can hope to help in building a world in which there will be greater justice because men will seek to understand one another better.

The chapter entitled "Operations" portrays the action carried out by the ICRC in Cyprus, the Middle East, Indo-China, the Asian Sub-Continent, southern Africa, Chile and Northern Ireland. There then follows a description of the work of regional delegations in various continents and of the relief supplies forwarded by the ICRC, a tabular summary of which is given elsewhere in this issue.

The next chapter is devoted to the Central Tracing Agency. This too is quoted later on in this *Review*. Under the heading "Principles and Law" the report summarizes the work accomplished in the field of international humanitarian law and the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions. Space is given also to the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law applicable in Armed Conflicts, and to ICRC co-operation with the United Nations in that sphere.

The chapter "External Relations" gives details of relations with National Societies and governments, of ICRC operational and general news reports, and of its public relations activities. "Personnel" includes a table of staff strength at headquarters and in the delegations, with information on staff movements in delegations in various countries.

The ICRC accounts are shown in detail, with statements of government and National Society contributions to the financing of the permanent structure in 1974. Contributions by governments, National societies and other institutions to the financing of the occasional structure are listed, followed by tables showing the accounts of special funds for operations in progress and for various other purposes.

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CENTRAL TRACING AGENCY

There was a marked increase in the volume of work handled by the Central Tracing Agency (CTA) in 1974.

The Geneva office received 109,254 letters (about 40,000 more than in the previous year) and sent out 83,418. During that same period it received 933 lists, containing 200,398 names which were registered in its card-index. In addition, 6,978 capture cards and 90,481 repatriation cards, also received in 1974, were inserted in the CTA card-index.

The full extent of the CTA's work cannot be properly appreciated by sole reference to its activities at Geneva. A vast amount of work is performed, in conjunction with headquarters, by the tracing agency offices set up in the field. It has therefore been thought preferable to report below on the combined activities of the CTA and its local agencies.¹

Cyprus

At CTA headquarters in Geneva

From the time the Cyprus conflict erupted, the CTA was faced with thousands of inquiries from anxious persons living outside the island, seeking information about their relatives there. The earliest inquiries were immediately transmitted to the branch agency in Cyprus by radio (at that time the only means of communication) and a large number of positive replies were sent back through the same channels.

¹ Except for field-work in Cyprus, for which a detailed account is given in a separate chapter of the *Annual Report 1974* p. 15.

This sustained activity went on for several months. Over 35,000 inquiries were launched by the CTA, and positive replies were obtained for approximately half that number.

The CTA also forwarded mail from and to prisoners of war and civilian internees, as well as messages from civilians to and from places outside Cyprus, while the local agencies dealt with the transmission of messages between the two zones in the island.

The CTA received 162 lists containing more than 22,000 names of prisoners of war, civilian internees, released detainees and refugees.

Asian sub-continent

At CTA headquarters in Geneva

During the first four months of 1974 the CTA continued to record in its card-indexes the names of Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian internees who had been released. The repatriation operations, which began in September 1973, were pursued until the end of April 1974. In addition, the CTA registered the names of all civilians transferred from Bangladesh to Pakistan and vice versa. In all, 171,000 names were recorded.

The end of the repatriation operations did not bring CTA activities in the Asian sub-continent to an end. The return of the last contingent of internees led to a new wave of inquiries regarding servicemen and civilians, including Indians, Pakistanis and persons of Bengali origin, who had been missing since 1971. Many families in Bangladesh also asked the CTA to contact close relatives who had been moved to Pakistan after having been interned in India, and whose whereabouts were unknown to them.

In the field

Tracing agencies set up in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca forwarded more than 600,000 family messages, some exchanged between Pakistani prisoners in India and their relatives in Pakistan or Bangladesh, and others between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The tracing agency in Dacca also bore a considerable part of the burden in registering Pakistanis wishing to be repatriated and non-locals applying for emigration to Pakistan (see Annual Report. 1974, page 36.

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After August 1974, most of the tasks performed by the tracing agency office in Islamabad were taken over by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, which had in the meantime formed its own national information bureau.

Middle East

At CTA headquarters in Geneva

Through the early part of 1974 the CTA continued the registration of servicemen captured or killed in the October 1973 war and belonging to the armed forces of all parties to the conflict. It also recorded the names of prisoners of war repatriated during the first half of 1974.

In addition it forwarded several thousand messages exchanged between families living in the occupied territories and their relatives in various countries in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

In various countries in the Middle East

ICRC delegations in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Israel handled altogether 338,707 family messages and transmitted a large number of official documents such as marriage certificates, death certificates, academic diplomas, etc.

The ICRC delegations also dealt with about 16,900 requests to trace servicemen listed as missing and civilians who were no longer giving any sign of existence to their relatives.

Indo-China

In 1974 the CTA, at the request of the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam, opened about a thousand inquiries with the object of tracing missing servicemen and civilians.

The names of several thousand servicemen and civilians reported missing in Laos and the territory of the Khmer Republic were also registered.

A task of considerable magnitude was accomplished by the tracing agency at Phnom Penh, run by the Khmer Red Cross, which prepared 75,000 cards and handled 10,000 requests for inquiries. Officials of the tracing agency, which operates nine local branches, visited 44 refugee camps regularly in the course of their inquiries.

Chile

At CTA headquarters in Geneva

In 1974 the CTA recorded 257 lists of detainees visited at regular intervals during the year by ICRC delegates. The information contained in these lists was added to that previously recorded during the last three months of 1973. By the end of 1974, the CTA had established 33,000 cards.

Inquiries were opened by the CTA, through its Santiago agency, with the object of obtaining news of detainees or of missing persons.

It also endeavoured to trace Chileans who had sought refuge in other countries and whose families in Chile were without news. Various bodies requested the CTA to intervene in a number of difficult cases involving the reuniting of families.

At Santiago

The Santiago agency kept up its extensive card-index, which proved to be of invaluable assistance to visiting delegates and was utilized to substantiate the merits of requests for aid made by the families of detainees.

Numerous cases of emigrants and persons wishing to be reunited with their families were also handled by the Santiago agency, in co-operation with the CTA, the Chilean authorities, COMAR (*Comisión de Ayuda a los Refugiados*) and representatives of specialized agencies. In this connection, the Santiago agency delivered travel papers to persons without passports.

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Finally, names of detainees visited by ICRC delegates in various African countries and in Indonesia were also filed by the CTA.

Besides these activities connected with current events or conflicts of recent origin, the CTA continued to reply to all requests still being received from authorities of the home countries, National Societies or private persons concerning persons who were made prisoner or who died during the Second World War. As in past years, the 38 million cards relating to the 1939/45 conflict held at the CTA constitute an irreplaceable source of information as evidence for the delivery of certificates in view of war pensions or for deter-

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mining the fate of missing or displaced persons. These tasks were performed in close co-operation with the International Tracing Service at Arolsen, and depended to a great extent on the valuable aid furnished by National Societies.

INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE

The International Tracing Service (I.T.S.) at Arolsen, which has the task of gathering and utilizing its archives concerning concentration camps and keeping a card-index of former detainees up to date, continued to be highly active in 1974.

Although the volume of mail handled in 1974 fell slightly compared with the particularly high figures of the previous year, there was still considerably more activity than in 1971 and 1972, as may be seen from the following table:

	Inquiries received	Replies given
1971	123,329	169,106
1972	127,872	187,007
1973	221,860	245,410
1974	210,465	228,583

The 1974 inquiries can be classified as follows: requests for incarceration certificates (26,053); for residence certificates (6,094); for death certificates (4,301); for documents relating to cases of sickness (3,241); for photocopies (3,058); for work certificates with a view to obtaining an annuity or pension (6,551); for information in connection with written tributes to the memory of victims of deportation (129,394); inquiries from record offices or relating to publications (3,758); requests submitted by attorneys-general (17,322); requests for individual searches (7,977); and requests for historical and statistical information (318).

In 1974, 1,250,483 new reference cards were added to the records, bringing the total number of cards up to 39,700,000. The I.T.S. completed the compilation of an extensive list of first names and their many variants, collected in an 841-page index containing over 48,000 names and variants.

Thanks to additional documents acquired by the I.T.S., positive information was supplied concerning numerous cases which had

been submitted earlier. The documents acquired in 1974 originated *inter alia* from the "Central Commission for the study of Hitlerian crimes" in Warsaw, the Auschwitz State Museum, the "Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltung" in Ludwigsburg and the Austrian Resistance Archives in Vienna. The new acquisitions contain valuable information concerning in particular the Theresienstadt Ghetto and the concentration camps at Stutthof, Gross-Rosen, Lublin, Mittelbau (Dora), Sachsenhausen, Neuengamme and Ravensbrück (both women's camp and men's camp).

Preparatory work on the second volume of the "Catalogue of places of detention", to supplement the first volume issued in 1969, was delayed by the thorough investigation made of the newly-acquired documents. The second volume will probably be ready this summer (1975).

It should be added that the "Special civil status registry office", which is empowered to register officially the deaths which occurred in the former concentration camps, on presentation of proof of death by the International Tracing Service, completed its twenty-fifth year of operation on 1 September 1974. Though it is a public service, independent of the ITS, the two bodies work in close co-operation in view of their common objectives.

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RELIEF SUPPLIES DELIVERED OR DISTRIBUTED BY THE ICRC

Africa

		Sw. fr.
Algeria	60 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for drought victims	48,000.—
	5 tons of whole powdered milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for drought victims . . .	35,000.—
Angola	Aid to prisoners	1,100.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	900.—
	Ambulance for Red Cross	21,000.—
Burundi	Aid to detainees	650.—
Cameroon	Aid to detainees	6,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	4,000.—
Central African Republic	Aid to Red Cross.	950.—
Chad	20 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for drought victims	80,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	2,100.—
Congo	20 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population. . . .	16,000.—
	Aid to detainees	1,500.—
	Aid to Portuguese prisoners	850.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	800.—
Ethiopia	50 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for drought victims	40,000.—
	230 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population of the province of Eritrea	184,000.—
	Aid to detainees	311,500.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	20,000.—

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Gambia	Aid to detainees	5,500.—
Ghana	Aid to Red Cross.	1,100.—
Guinea Bissau	Aid to PAIGC prisoners in Portuguese hands prior to independence	350.—
Kenya	50 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population. . . .	40,000.—
Liberia	20 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population. . . .	16,000.—
Mali	20 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for drought victims	80,000.—
Mauritania	40 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for civilian drought victims . . .	32,000.—
	20 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for civilian drought victims	80,000.—
	Aid to political detainees	7,900.—
	Aid to Red Crescent	10,000.—
Mauritius	50 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population. . . .	40,000.—
Mozambique	10 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for victims of disturbances in Lourenço-Marquês	70,000.—
	Aid to victims of disturbances in Lourenço- Marquês	53,000.—
	Aid to displaced persons, Tete District . . .	10,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	800.—
	Aid to prisoners	400.—
Niger	20 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for drought victims	80,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	800.—
Rhodesia	30 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the population in pro- tected villages	210,000.—
	Aid to detainees	32,900.—
	Medical aid to the population in protected villages	1,800.—
Rwanda	5 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for a Red Cross orphanage	35,000.—
	Aid to detainees	5,300.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	2,400.—
Senegal	40 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for drought victims	32,000.—
	20 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for drought victims	80,000.—

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		Sw. fr.
Sierra Leone	Aid to Red Cross	750.—
South Africa	Aid to detainees	3,200.—
Togo	20 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population	16,000.—
	Aid to detainees	3,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross	1,900.—
Upper Volta	20 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for drought victims	80,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross	12,800.—
Zaire	20 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population	16,000.—
	Aid to Portuguese prisoners	1,200.—
	Aid to Red Cross	1,500.—
Zambia	Aid to detainees	4,300.—
FLNA	40 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for Angolan refugees in Zaire	32,000.—
FRELIMO	77 kg of medicaments, a gift from the Swiss Red Cross	11,000.—
MPLA	Pharmaceutical products and foodstuffs for the Medical Assistance Service	4,800.—
	Ambulance	35,000.—
PAC	128 kg of medicaments	10,500.—
PAIGC	10 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian population	70,000.—
SWAPO	68 kg of medicaments	5,300.—
ZANU	42 kg of medicaments	5,000.—
ZAPU	104 kg of medicaments	4,500.—
	Total	<u><u>2,020,350.—</u></u>

Latin America

Argentina	Aid to Red Cross	19,950.—
Bolivia	Aid to detainees	22,300.—
	Aid to families of detainees	6,200.—
	Aid to Red Cross	5,100.—
Chile¹	600 tons of wheat flour and 120 tons of powdered whole milk, gifts of the Swiss Government for the civilian population	1,320,000.—

¹ Not including relief despatched and distributed under the special programme in Chile.

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		Sw. fr.
	1,500 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for the civilian population . . .	6,000,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross	45,400.—
	Aid to Red Cross for flood victims	57,700.—
Colombia	Aid to detainees	5,700.—
	Aid to families of detainees	200.—
Ecuador	Aid to detainees	1,200.—
Guyana	3 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	21,000.—
Haiti	10 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	70,000.—
Honduras	4 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	28,000.—
	Aid to detainees	12,800.—
Paraguay	3 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	21,000.—
	Aid to detainees	11,500.—
	Aid to Red Cross	1,300.—
	Aid to families of detainees	1,700.—
Uruguay	10 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	70,000.—
	Aid to detainees	46,700.—
	Total	<u><u>7,767,750.—</u></u>

Asia ¹

Bangladesh	60 kg of eyeglass frames, a gift from the Red Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany, and 43 kg of eyeglass lenses for the Islamia Eye Hospital at Dacca	18,000.—
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¹ Relief designated as International Red Cross Assistance (IRCA) does not include the supplementary assistance supplied by National Red Cross Societies in the form of goods and services.

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		Sw. fr.
Burma	10 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	70,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	700.—
Democratic Republic of Vietnam	Provision by IRCA of prefabricated housing for the civilian population	6,678,400.—
Hong Kong	Aid to South Vietnamese repatriated persons	600.—
India	Aid to Red Cross.	500.—
Indonesia	Aid to detainees	82,800.—
Khmer Republic	Aid to prisoners of war	2,600.—
	IRCA relief programme for civilians	5,026,500.—
Laos	Aid to prisoners of war	2,700.—
	Aid to Burmese refugees	6,500.—
	IRCA relief programme for civilians	238,800.—
Laos Patriotic Front	Medical aid and miscellaneous	183,800.—
	IRCA relief programme for civilians	359,800.—
Malaysia	15 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Red Cross feeding programme.	105,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	1,700.—
Philippines	Aid to detainees	5,500.—
Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam	IRCA provision of hospital equipment . . .	919,400.—
Republic of Vietnam	Aid to prisoners of war	2,000.—
	Medico-social programme in orphanages . .	76,500.—
	IRCA relief programme for civilians	3,854,000.—
Sri Lanka	Aid to detainees	40,000.—
Total		<u>17,675,800.—</u>

Europe

Greece	One ton of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for a Red Cross children's home	7,000.—
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		Sw. fr.
Hungary	Medicaments for the Red Cross	2,200.—
Poland	Medicaments for the Red Cross	2,100.—
Romania	Medicaments	500.—
Miscellaneous	Medicaments for various countries	2,100.—
	Total	13,900.—

Middle East

Arab Republic of Egypt	100 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for displaced persons	80,000.—
	500 tons of wheat flour and 100 tons of powdered skimmed milk, gifts from the EEC for displaced persons	800,000.—
	Miscellaneous relief supplies	17,800.—
	Medicaments, surgical equipment, blankets, clothing, powdered milk, ambulances and wheelchairs, gifts from various National Red Cross Societies to the Red Crescent for the civilian population	1,353,100.—
Democratic Yemen	100 tons of wheat flour and 20 tons of powdered whole milk, gifts from the Swiss Government for the civilian population	220,000.—
	Aid to detainees and their families	9,600.—
Israel and occupied territories	1,800 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the Swiss Government for the civilian populations of the West Bank of the Jordan, Gaza and Sinai.	1,440,000.—
	Aid to civilian detainees	350,000.—
	Aid to civilian population and miscellaneous relief	46,300.—
Jordan	1,000 tons of wheat flour and 100 tons of powdered skimmed milk, gifts from the EEC for the civilian population	1,200,000.—
	Aid to detainees	4,300.—
Lebanon	100 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for the civilian population.	400,000.—
	Aid to Red Cross.	31,500.—
Syria	10 tons of powdered whole milk, a gift from the Swiss Government for the Aleppo Red Crescent	70,000.—
	100 tons of powdered skimmed milk and 2,800 tons of wheat flour, gifts from the EEC for displaced persons from Golan	2,640,000.—

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		Sw. fr.
	Aid to civilian population	10,100.—
	Medicaments, surgical equipment, tents, blankets and powdered milk, gifts from various National Societies for the civilian population	1,136,600.—
Yemen	50 tons of wheat flour, a gift from the EEC for the civilian population	40,000.—
	Aid to detainees	53,600.—
	Equipment for prosthesis workshop at Sanaa	36,100.—
"Palestinian Red Crescent"	50 tons of powdered skimmed milk, a gift from the EEC for the civilian population	200,000.—
	Aid to Palestinian Red Crescent	48,800.—
	Medicaments and other medical material, gifts from various National Red Cross Societies for the civilian population	80,000.—
"Magen David Adom"	Medicaments, surgical equipment and an ambulance, gifts from various National Red Cross Societies for the civilian population . .	262,800.—
	Total	<u>10,530,600.—</u>