

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Indo-China

National Tracing Services

Between the end of December 1972 and mid-January 1973, National Red Cross Societies opened three offices to trace missing persons: in Saigon, Vientiane and Phnom-Penh. The ICRC has sent to these three towns specialists from its Central Tracing Agency to help the Societies organize the offices, prepare the necessary equipment (printing index cards in the local vernaculars, for example), and train local staff.¹ Work has already started on the registration of requests for news. At the same time, information campaigns have been launched through the press and over the radio in order to make the people and local authorities aware of the opening of these national tracing services.

Asian sub-continent

Messages transmitted in 1972

The three offices—in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dacca—opened by the ICRC Central Tracing Agency together with the National Red Cross Societies of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh handled a considerable volume of work in 1972. A total of nigh on five million messages were transmitted of which 1.5 million were civilian messages between Pakistan and Bangladesh and about 3 million were prisoner-of-war letters passing between India and Pakistan.

¹ *Plate.*

Transport of relief in Bangladesh

On 25 December 1971, a white plane bearing a red cross landed at Dacca with six delegates on board. This plane, lent by the Swiss Government to help ICRC relief work in Bangladesh, was the first to touch down at Dacca after the cessation of hostilities. It was at once used to carry food, medicaments and various emergency supplies to civilians sorely tried by events. A few days later, a second DC-6, likewise supplied by the Swiss Government, arrived to supplement the ICRC transport capacity.

These two planes carried over 11,000 tons of relief supplies in the Asian sub-continent and more especially in Bangladesh. Furthermore, some 8,000 persons were conveyed, apart from the sick and wounded prisoners of war who were repatriated to India and Pakistan.

The first DC-6 was released in June 1972.

As the situation no longer required the air-lift of relief supplies, the Swiss Government, with the agreement of the ICRC, terminated the mission of the second DC-6 at the end of 1972.

New Head of Delegation in India

Mr. Nils de Uthemann, who has been appointed Head of the ICRC Delegation in India, is directing the nine doctors and delegates whose main job is to visit Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian internees in some fifty camps. ICRC visits to these camps resumed early in February 1973 after having been suspended in January at the request of the Detaining Power.

ICRC delegates may freely visit these camps and may speak in private with any prisoners they choose. Reports on these visits are sent to the prisoners' own Government and to the Detaining Power.

Visit to Indian merchant seamen in Pakistan

In January 1973, ICRC delegates in Pakistan visited 62 Indian merchant seamen interned in Karachi and Hyderabad and near Quetta.

Middle East

Over the past few weeks, ICRC delegates in Israel and the Arab countries have paid several visits to prisoners of war with whom they have, as usual, been able to speak in private.

In Israel, visits were paid on 17 and 29 January 1973 to the 109 Arab prisoners of war (58 Egyptians, 41 Syrians and 10 Lebanese), interned in the Sarafand army camp. The five Syrian officers were visited on 18 and 30 January 1973.

In the Arab Republic of Egypt, the ten Israeli prisoners of war held in the Abassieh military prison were visited on 20 January 1973.

In Syria, the ICRC delegate visited the three Israeli prisoners of war on 20 January and 1 February 1973.

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

The ICRC delegate in this country visited Mansoura Prison in Aden from 20 to 24 January 1973 when he saw 240 persons detained for political reasons.

Europe

The ICRC Central Tracing Agency having been asked to renew the "travel documents" of nearly 2,000 stateless Asians who left Uganda on 8 November 1972 and who are still lodged in transit camps around Europe, two Agency delegates went to Italy, Malta and Austria from 29 January to 3 February 1973, in order to

extend the validity of the documents to 31 July. Such a measure will not be repeated. One delegate visited four camps housing about 800 Asians in Southern Italy (Naples and Lecce) and a camp of about 360 persons at Valletta (Malta). The other delegate remained in Vienna where the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration had centralized all the "travel documents" of the 649 Asians living in various camps in Austria.

Not only is the future uncertain for many of these stateless Asians but they also have to face the anxiety of being cut off from other members of their families, most of whom are in Great Britain. The delegates have also received many requests for news of relatives who have been missing since the events of November 1972.

ICRC President in Tunisia

From 18 to 25 February 1973, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, and Mr. François Payot, Regional Delegate for North Africa, were on an official visit to Tunisia.

Accompanied by Dr. Fourati, President of the Tunisian Red Crescent, they were received in audience by the Head of the State, President Habib Bourguiba. Mr. Naville also met the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Defence, Justice, Health and Education, and a senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their talks were most productive and concerned essentially the development of international humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC, particularly in the Middle East.

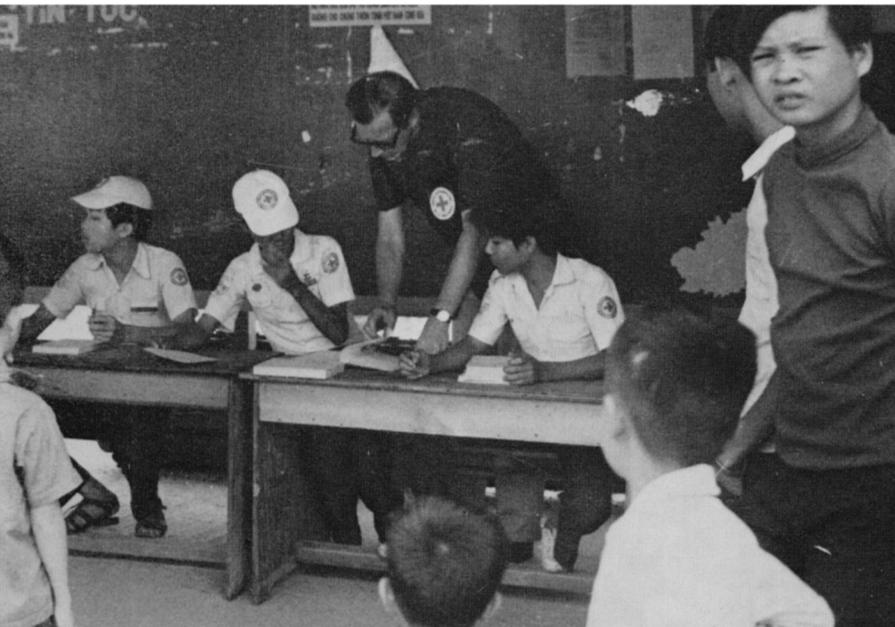
With leaders of the Tunisian Red Crescent, Mr. Naville visited the National Society's main installations.

Wherever it went, the ICRC delegation was warmly welcomed and encountered great understanding for the problems with which the Red Cross has to contend.



Syria: Flour distribution to displaced persons on the Golan Heights.

Republic of Vietnam: Members of the Junior Red Cross at Da Nang learn from the assistant head of the Geneva Central Tracing Agency how to fill in tracing request forms.





Dahomey: An ICRC delegate lectures representatives of the armed forces on Red Cross principles and the Geneva Conventions.

Khmer Republic: An ICRC delegate (*right*) presents the "Soldier's Manual" to representatives of the armed forces and to the President of the Khmer Red Cross.

