

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***In Nigeria**

ICRC medical teams.—In October the medical team led by Dr. Kaare Sandnaes, surgeon, placed by the Norwegian Red Cross at the disposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross, as part of its medical programme in Nigeria, was installed in the Uromi hospital some 70 miles North of Benin.

The ICRC medical team set up at Achi in Biafra, consisting of Dr. Erwin Spirgi and Dr. Dieter Thurig, functioned practically night and day during the last fortnight of October, having carried out a total of 87 operations, sixty of which were under anaesthetics.

Military prisoners.—ICRC delegates have visited various groups of military prisoners captured in action and held on both sides.

An appeal by the ICRC.—Greatly concerned over the news, through its delegation in Nigeria, of the summary execution of three prisoners of war and of the massacring of civilian populations, the International Committee of the Red Cross made an urgent appeal on October 21 to the belligerents for them to conform strictly to the provisions of international humanitarian law and in particular to article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. The appeal was subsequently repeated over the radio.

In the Congo

At the beginning of October 1967, the ICRC decided that, consistent with Resolution X adopted at the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross and in compliance with a request from the Organization of African Unity, it would co-operate in the evacuation of mercenaries and members of the Katanga gendarmerie who had been fighting against the central government.

The ICRC assigned a team of delegates under Mr. Raymond Gafner to go to the Congo to examine with the authorities ways and means of carrying out the evacuation operations.

The re-establishing of a normal situation in the Bukavu region, as was decided by the Organization of African Unity, and in which the International Committee accepted to assist, raises a number of problems which need to be successively resolved.

As arranged, the first phase of the ICRC's mission consisted in studying practical methods of carrying out a plan for the evacuation of the mercenaries and Katanga gendarmes, together with their families, as proposed by the OAU and accepted by Colonel Schramme, on condition that certain guarantees were given for the safety of all persons under his responsibility. For that purpose, the ICRC sent out eight delegates who have gone respectively to Kinshasa, Kigali, Bukavu, Lusaka and Malta.

The head of mission, Mr. R. Gafner, also visited Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, as, according to OAU plans, it was up to this State to provide a contingent of troops to ensure the security and neutralization of Bukavu during and after the evacuation. However, the Central African Republic made it known that it was not in a position to provide the contingent required.

At the same time, the ICRC delegates in Zambia and Rwanda made arrangements to ensure the transit, then the reception of the evacuated Katanga gendarmes. A Zambian government mission, also comprising a representative of that country's Red Cross, visited Colonel Monga, leader of the group of Katanga gendarmes entrenched in Bukavu, to study ways of evacuating his force and of harbouring it on Zambian territory. Zambia had in fact arranged to install the Katanga families in two agricultural zones which they would be free to develop as they wished.

The delegate of the ICRC in Malta, for his part, examined methods for the transit of Colonel Schramme's contingent before its members reached their final destinations, in principle their countries of origin, freedom of choice being assured.

At the time of going to press, the important question of the neutral security forces for Bukavu still remained to be resolved. The head of the ICRC mission was returning to Kinshasa to take up this matter again with General Mobutu, Chairman of the recent

OAU Conference in Kinshasa, since the responsibility for this definitely rests with that organization.

In the Near East

On October 9, 564 Egyptian civilians, chiefly women and children from the El Arish area, were repatriated to Egypt with the help of the delegation of the ICRC across the Suez Canal. Sick cases were included in the convoy.

This operation, carried out with the agreement of both sides, comprised in particular the reuniting of families and the settling of individual cases.

Further repatriation took place on October 16.

The ICRC's rôle in these actions consists in drawing up lists of persons wishing to return West of the Canal. Lists are sent to the ICRC delegation in Cairo which then transmits them to the appropriate authorities. These are subsequently forwarded to the ICRC's sub-delegation in Gaza which hands them over to the Israeli liaison officer.

The delegates then helped in facilitating contacts between the two parties on the Canal and in neutralizing the El Qantara crossing during the course of the operation. The military authorities on both sides have undertaken all transport arrangements.

In Vietnam

Relief work for the civilian population.—Together with members of the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam, the ICRC delegates in Saigon went to the highlands of Plei-Ku and Kontum, where they visited several institutions devoted to the welfare of orphans and needy children. They handed to four of these institutions a total of 300,000 piastres (nearly Sw.fr. 12,000) appropriated from funds made available through the International Committee.

Visits to detention centres.—In September and October, ICRC delegates continued visiting detention centres where captive members of the National Liberation Front are held by the army of the Republic of Vietnam.

After visiting camps, hospitals and screening centres in which are held Vietnamese to whom prisoner of war status has been

granted, the ICRC representatives went to prisons (re-education centres) where other Vietnamese are detained for reasons connected with the hostilities.

Each delegate is accompanied on his visit by a doctor-delegate. Relief supplies have been distributed in each prison. Since the beginning of the year the ICRC representatives have been able to see the conditions of detention for some 16,000 Vietnamese prisoners of war or civilians in 46 camps or prisons throughout the territory of the Vietnam Republic.

Lists of prisoners of war.—The Central Tracing Agency at ICRC headquarters regularly receives lists of names of Vietnamese nationals who have been granted prisoner of war status by the Detaining Power. By the end of October these lists amounted to about 7,000 names.

POW's in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.—The ICRC is continuing its efforts to help Vietnamese and American prisoners captured by the North Vietnamese. It has again repeated its request to the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam for lists of the names of prisoners of war.

In Greece

On October 15, two medical delegates, Dr. Jean-Pierre de Chastonay and Dr. Jacques Chatillon left for Greece to pursue and develop the International Committee of the Red Cross action in that country. The Greek Government having already given the necessary authorization to the International Committee, these two delegates resumed visits to places of detention. This is the fourth mission undertaken in Greece by representatives of the International Committee since the events of April 25, 1967.

In Poland

A mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross comprising Dr. Jacques-F. de Rougemont, Mr. Jean-Pierre Mau-noir, Assistant Director at the ICRC, and Miss Lix Simonius, visited Warsaw from September 30 to October 14, to investigate a further group of about 80 persons having been subjected to pseudo-medical

experiments in Nazi concentration camps. As usual, (this action started in 1961) the International Committee's representatives talked with the victims concerned and the Polish doctors who had examined them. The files of accepted cases will now be submitted to the neutral Commission, designated by the ICRC, which will meet under the chairmanship of Judge William Lenoir (Switzerland), to give its final decision.

Conversations also took place with the Polish Red Cross and the General Commission of the Ministry of Justice concerning measures to be taken in view of a further flow of claims expected in the near future numbering a thousand fresh cases, when about 500 have so far been able to be settled.

IN GENEVA

New ICRC Film

Middle East 1967 is a new 20 minute film in colour produced by the International Committee. French, English, German and Spanish versions are obtainable from the ICRC.

It shows various aspects of the emergency relief work following the outbreak of the Middle East war in June, bringing out the neutral rôle of the ICRC and its delegates in such matters as the repatriation first of wounded and secondly of able-bodied prisoners of war, transmission of family messages, reuniting of families, forwarding and distribution to war victims of supplies sent by National Societies.

Several sequences at the Allenby Bridge, where most of the returning refugees crossed over the Jordan, reflect vividly the dramatic experiences of so many unfortunates and the ICRC delegates' efforts to help and comfort them.