

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Rhodesia

In May the ICRC delegate-general for Africa, Mr. F. Schmidt, accompanied by the regional delegate for Southern Africa, Mr. N. de Rougemont, and a medical delegate, Dr. A. Vischer, carried out a new series of visits to places of detention in Rhodesia.

They visited six places of detention—Wha Wha, Gwelo, Que Que, Gatooma, Salisbury Remand and Chikirubi Female—in which there were 687 persons detained under the “Emergency Regulations” and with whom they were able to talk in private. They also went to visit Mr. Garfield Todd, the former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, who was under house arrest, a restriction which has since been lifted.

We would mention that in Rhodesia the ICRC has access to administrative detainees held without trial but not to prisoners undergoing interrogation, whose case is sub judice, or who have been convicted.

During an audience granted them by Mr. Hilary Squires, Minister of Justice, the delegates repeated the ICRC’s request for permission to visit the “30 and 60-day detainees”, and to visit convicted prisoners as it had done in 1974.

The ICRC delegates were also received by Mr. Pieter van der Byle, Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs. They discussed with him current ICRC activities in Rhodesia and also the respect of humanitarian principles and the application of the Geneva Conventions in Rhodesia.

Middle East

Lebanon

In order to continue and even extend its humanitarian work in Lebanon during the next four months, the ICRC appealed on 24 May to governments and National Societies for funds. The appeal, asking for 21 million Swiss francs, is intended to enable the ICRC to continue helping the two major categories of victims, namely the wounded and the needy displaced persons.

(a) *Casualties*. — The ICRC supplies the Lebanese hospitals which treat the wounded and which are often sadly lacking in basic medicaments and medical equipment.

The funds necessary to continue this work—including the maintenance of the ICRC field hospital—exceed 1 million Swiss francs each month.

(b) *Displaced and needy persons*. — It is estimated that some 150,000 people—most of them displaced, having lost their homes in the fighting—are in urgent need of food and medical and other assistance.

Estimated needs per month amount to 1,643 tons of food (900 tons flour, 150 tons skimmed milk, 225 tons meat, 68 tons cooking fat and 300 tons of protein-rich food), 15 tons of soap and 150,000 blankets; a monthly budget of 4.2 million Swiss francs.

In view of the poor response to its previous appeal, the ICRC organized on 8 June a briefing for the representatives of government missions in Geneva. The President of the Executive Board, Mr. Roger Gallopin, described the ICRC's activities in Lebanon and the action programme for the next four months. He insisted on the urgency of the ICRC's need for financial support from the community of states, the institution having spent the funds which had been made available to it, and made it clearly understood that if substantial financial aid were not forthcoming, the ICRC would be obliged to whittle down its work and perhaps even to withdraw its delegates in the near future.

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In spite of the renewed outbreak of fighting during the first fortnight of June, the ICRC delegation in Lebanon continued its work of providing medical assistance and food to the victims. The staff strength consists of:

— a delegation in Beirut with four delegates, one secretary, one radio operator and an eleven-person medical team (provided by the

National Societies of Denmark, Finland and Norway) working in the field hospital, plus the locally recruited staff;

- one team at Jounieh, comprising two delegates to forward relief to the north of Beirut and towards the eastern districts of the town;
- one mobile medical team, and two delegates, at Tripoli.

From 1 to 31 May, the field hospital activities were as follows: 2,200 out-patients; 80 cases of major surgery; 207 cases of minor surgery; 280 patients receiving physiotherapy.

As a result of the increasing intensity of the fighting at the beginning of June, the field hospital was evacuated; for safety the patients were removed to buildings near to the place where delegates and doctors lived. This did not impair the efficiency of the work which continued with undiminished intensity.

In May, 29 tons of medicaments and medical supplies and 31 tons of milk powder and baby foods were sent to Lebanon. These were provided by the ICRC, WHO and the National Societies of the Arab Republic of Egypt, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom. Since it started its relief action in the autumn of 1975, the ICRC has despatched 289 tons of relief supplies, valued at 4.2 million Swiss francs.

In a press release dated 21 June 1976, it was stated that a DC-8 and a DC-6 chartered by the International Committee of the Red Cross took off for Larnaca (Cyprus) with 42 tons of relief supplies for the victims of events in Lebanon. Part of these medical supplies and milk powder will be forwarded by sea to Jounieh, and part will carry on in the DC-6 to Beirut airport.

These two flights will bring to more than 300 tons the quantity of relief supplies sent to Lebanon by the ICRC since it started its operations in that country last autumn.

The Central Tracing Agency made more than 1,000 enquiries in May with a view to replying to requests for news. Since October 1975, the Agency has handled more than 6,000 such enquiries and has given replies to about 75% of that number.

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Prisoners having been taken in the fighting during the first fortnight of June, the ICRC has approached the parties concerned in order to visit those prisoners.

On 14 and 16 June, its delegates went to see 46 prisoners taken by the Arab Lebanon Army (ALA), 5 of them members of the Syrian armed forces and 41 members of the Saïka.

Latin America

Chile

In May, the ICRC delegation in Chile, led by Mr. R. K. Jenny, continued its activities for the benefit of detainees and their families.

Seventeen places of detention, holding in all 960 detainees, were visited. As our readers know, the ICRC does not have access to all detainees from the beginning of their detention. The Chilean authorities permit its delegates to visit camps of detainees held under emergency regulations and civilian prisons. The delegates have access also to several places of detention under military control. On the other hand, the ICRC is still not permitted to visit some detention centres controlled by security agencies, with one exception where delegates may go but may not talk in private with the detainees as they may in other places of detention to which they have access. The ICRC is continuing its efforts to obtain access to all places of detention where there are detainees.

The value of relief supplies distributed in May to detainees amounted to about 6,500 dollars.

The value of assistance distributed to detainees' families amounted to nearly 16,000 dollars. In all 1,840 families benefited; 1,385 in the provinces and 455 in Santiago.

Panama

One of the tasks of ICRC regional delegates is to promote knowledge of the Geneva Conventions among the general public—particularly among youth—and the armed forces.

Mr. C. du Plessis, regional delegate for Central America and the Caribbean, is at present on mission in several of the countries in his sector, his main objective being the dissemination of knowledge of the Conventions and of the Red Cross humanitarian principles.

In Panama, the first stage of his mission, he achieved some encouraging results, thanks to the support given him by leaders of the National Guard and the National Society. Accompanied by the President of the Panamanian Red Cross, Mr. J. Espino, and by the Society's Director General, Mr. A. Canton, he recorded on video-cassette a short course on the Conventions, illustrated by the film "Red Cross on a White Ground". This course will be broadcast in all the country's barracks. In addition, this film, accompanied by an interview of the delegate on ICRC activities, was broadcast on the national television network.

Plans are being made to organize a conference on the Conventions for senior officers of the National Guard.

Asia

Mission by the delegate-general for Asia

The ICRC delegate-general for Asia, Mr. Serge Nessi, was in South East Asia from 8 May to 22 June 1976, accompanied by Mr. André Pasquier, regional delegate, based in Kuala Lumpur.

The object of the mission was to examine current problems in South East Asia and to prepare further visits to political detainees.

In Thailand, Mr. Nessi met the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his senior staff, senior officials of the Ministry of the Interior, the Director of the Internal Security Operations Command, the leaders of the Thai Red Cross and representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. The draft of an official agreement authorizing the operation of the Bangkok delegation was studied jointly with the authorities. In addition, the Thai Government gave its agreement for further visits to political detainees.

In Malaysia, the delegate-general had constructive discussions with the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Social Affairs, the Chief of Staff, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials of the Malaysian Red Crescent and of the UNHCR. Following recent visits to detention centres, a programme of assistance to political detainees and their families was examined.

In Singapore, the ICRC representatives met the President of the Republic of Singapore, the Head of the Medical Services of the Armed Forces, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of the Interior, and National Red Cross leaders, with whom they discussed the conventional ICRC mission.

In Indonesia, the authorities agreed to further visits to political detainees. Practical arrangements were discussed when the ICRC delegates met the Chief of Staff of the Command for Security and Order, and the President of the Indonesian Red Cross.

In the Philippines, after conferring with the Chief of Staff, the Head of the Constabulary, senior officials of the Ministries of Defence and of Foreign Affairs, and leaders of the National Red Cross Society, Mr. Nessi and Mr. Pasquier were joined by Mr. J. F. Labarthe, ICRC consultant on detention problems. The delegate-general then returned

to Geneva and the regional delegate and Mr. Labarthe began a series of visits to detention centres. These visits will continue until mid-July. During their travels on the southern island of Mindanao, the delegates assessed the needs of people displaced by events. An assistance programme is to be started in agreement with the National Red Cross Society and the authorities.

Timor

The ICRC delegates went to Jakarta to discuss with the Indonesian Red Cross and authorities and with the authorities at Dili, the continuation of Red Cross action in Timor.

The main purpose of these conversations was to plan arrangements for the application of an agreement which had been concluded on 4 May in Geneva between the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross. This agreement provided for the distribution to displaced persons in Timor of food—2,000 tons of cereals and 100 tons of milk powder—from the European Economic Community. According to the agreement the ICRC was to have facilities to permit it to survey needs on the spot. However, although the ICRC delegates were able to go to Dili on 1 June, they could only stay for a few hours, so that they could make no assessment as requested by the EEC.

On returning to Jakarta, the delegates expressed to the Indonesian authorities and Red Cross their surprise, stressing that the ICRC had not been given the facilities provided for in the agreement of 4 May and could therefore not ask the EEC to carry out the programme.

Bangladesh

The new ICRC regional delegate for the Asian sub-continent, Mr. D. Borel, went to Bangladesh in the first fortnight of May to make contact with the authorities and the Red Cross Society. He conferred with the chairman of the National Society, Justice B. A. Siddiki, and with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Health and Social Welfare, Education and the Interior. They discussed problems still pending concerning non-Bengali persons whose applications for transfer to Pakistan were still being examined, the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions within the armed forces and among youth, the use of the red cross sign, and ICRC activities for political detainees.



Canada: Mr. R. Gallopin, President of the ICRC Executive Council, conversing with Mr. P. E. Trudeau, Canadian Prime Minister (*right*).

United States: Mr. R. Gallopin, with Mr. J. J. Sisco, Under-Secretary of State at the State Department (*left*).





Dacca: An ICRC delegate addressing a World Red Cross Day meeting. (Right, the President of the Bangladesh Red Cross.)

Managua: Closing session of the Seventh Meeting of Presidents of National Red Cross Societies.



North America

President of Executive Board in the United States and Canada

From 6 to 28 May, Mr. Roger Gallopin, President of the Executive Board, was in the United States and Canada, accompanied by Mr. Laurent Marti, special delegate for the Executive Board. For discussions in Washington and New York, he was accompanied by Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, Director of Operations, and by Mr. André-Dominique Micheli, ICRC delegate to international organizations.

At the invitation of the American Red Cross, Mr. Gallopin went first to Portland (Oregon), where he took part in the National Convention of the American Red Cross Society.

Mr. Gallopin then went to Toronto and Ottawa-where he was received by the chairman of the Canadian Red Cross, Mr. J. G. M. Clark, and other leaders of the National Society, and by Mr. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister, Mr. H. Basil Robinson, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Paul Gérin-Lajoie, President of the Canadian International Development Agency. Several subjects of common interest related to the activities of the National Society and the ICRC and the financing of the ICRC were discussed.

On his return journey Mr. Gallopin stopped in Washington for various interviews with the Chairman, Mr. Frank Stanton, the President, Mr. George Elsey, and other leaders of the National Society, and with senior officials of the American administration including Mr. Joseph John Sisco, Under-Secretary of State in the State Department, Mr. James Wilson, Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs in the State Department, Mr. Daniel Parker, General Director of USAID, Senator Edward Kennedy, and Congressman G. V. Montgomery. The subject of these discussions was ICRC activity, particularly in Lebanon and Indochina.

In New York, in the absence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. William Buffum, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and of the General Assembly, Mr. Brian Urquhart, Assistant Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, and Mr. Abdulrahim A. Farah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, met Mr. Gallopin who outlined the ICRC's activities throughout the world.