

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Viet Nam

The International Committee of the Red Cross in August 1964 and again in February 1965 made an offer of material aid to the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, which that Society declined, adding that it would appeal for it in the case of necessity.

In view of the extension of the conflict and the evident increase in the number of victims, the ICRC, in August 1965, made a donation of 50,000 Sw. frs. (drawn on its own relief funds) to the North Vietnamese Red Cross, to be used at the latter's discretion for the victims. The Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam acknowledged and thanked the Committee for its aid.

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The International Committee also opened a credit account for the same amount for aid to refugees (displaced and regrouped populations) and to the war disabled (civilian and military) in territory controlled by the Saigon authorities. ICRC delegates made inquiries in August in Central and South Viet Nam in order to decide with the South Vietnamese Red Cross upon ways of carrying out this double action.

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The ICRC informed the 104 National Societies of the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red Lion and Sun of the measures it had thus

taken on behalf of the victims of the conflict. It also drew their attention to the request for assistance by the National Front of Liberation of South Viet Nam which had been transmitted to it by the British Red Cross.

The International Committee declared itself prepared to transmit all donations it receives for the victims in both North and South Viet Nam. Several National Red Cross Societies have already indicated their interest in this action and have sent donations.

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The Governments of the United States and of the Republic of Viet Nam, having replied in a positive manner to the ICRC's representations concerning the application of the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 on the protection of the victims of war,¹ the International Committee asked them to send lists of prisoners held by them and authorization for its delegates to visit these in conformity with the Conventions. Some places of detention had already been visited in 1964 and in early 1965 and distributions of relief had been effected jointly with the South Vietnamese Red Cross. The Committee now hopes to be in a position to pursue and extend this action.

It has again approached the Hanoi authorities and the National Front of Liberation, but has not yet received their replies concerning the application of the Geneva Conventions. It has made the same requests to them regarding members of the opposing armed forces captured by either of them.

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In the meantime the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC is continuing to transmit mail for prisoners in the hands of the National Front of Liberation. It has been informed that several of these family letters have reached their destination. The Agency has not

¹ Responses to the ICRC's appeal for the rules of humanity to be respected in Viet Nam are published in this current number.

so far had to transmit mail from the prisoners to their families.¹ Some prisoners were however able to give occasional news through other channels.

As regards deliveries of mail for prisoners in North Viet Nam, these were suspended in May 1965. Only one prisoner until then had been given permission to reply and to receive parcels. The ICRC is making efforts for such exchanges of news and deliveries to be resumed.

Yemen

Activity among the tribes East of Sanaa. — A medical team, comprising Dr. Rainer Siegenthaler and a male nurse, recently spent a month in the territory of the Naham tribe and the surrounding villages. The ICRC delegates, who established their base in a large cave in the Djerbet-et-Tahl gorge, were able to attend to numerous sick often from very distant regions. Several Egyptian prisoners were permitted to attend for treatment and for thorough medical examination. Visits to homes entailed journeys on foot or by donkey.

In the whole of this region with a population of some 70,000 people, there is not one single doctor. The Red Cross mobile team treated 1,160 patients.

It then went to the Khaulan district, where it gave 100 consultations daily, apart from many visits to homes.

Medical team in South Yemen. — A mobile team, comprising Dr. Hugo Steiner and a male nurse, went to the Qataba region (South Yemen). Immediately sick people converged upon it from the most remote villages as well as refugees from the Federation of South Arabia. Work for this team is not without its dangers, as fighting is going on in the immediate vicinity of Qataba.

Donation by the Swiss Red Cross. — Included in the relief supplies being distributed in Sanaa by the ICRC delegation was a

¹ *Erratum.* — In the July 1965 issue of the *International Review*, first paragraph page 356 should read: "The ICRC was preparing to intervene for exchanges of correspondence between the prisoners and their families and to ask for their release, when it learned that they had been set free."

consignment of 120 sacks of clothing, 7 cases of slippers, 5 cases of jackets, 90,000 cigarettes and 111 kilos of medical supplies, sent by the Swiss Red Cross.

Prisoners and political detainees. — Whilst at Djerbet-et-Tahl and Beni-Massar, Dr. Siegenthaler and a male nurse medically examined all the prisoners held by the Naham tribe.

In addition, Mr. Edmond de Palézieux, delegate, on June 26, visited the prison of Bustan-el-Kher in Sanaa where 85 women are held with their children. Most of them have been in detention for 33 months. The ICRC representative delivered 17 letters and a few weeks later received 17 replies for forwarding.

Medical action in favour of war disabled. — The last pairs of crutches were distributed between June 15 and July 15; a new consignment from Geneva is awaited.

A supply of wooden legs was delivered to the Hodeida hospital on July 12.

Japan

After the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Samuel Gonard, in the course of his visit to Japan, attended the embarkation and departure of a number of Koreans being repatriated by the Japanese Red Cross, the International Committee has decided to prolong until further notice its co-operation in this programme which is being carried out so effectively and smoothly.

Since these operations began in December 1959, 127 vessels have sailed from the port of Niigata with 84,005 Koreans.

Inauguration of a sundial in the garden of the ICRC in Geneva. — Address given by the President of the donating committee, Jonkheer W. C. S. Laman Trip.



Photos François Martin Geneva

Mr. Léopold Boissier expressing the ICRC's thanks.

