

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Vietnam**

The International Committee of the Red Cross has continued its exchange of correspondence with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on various humanitarian problems raised by the present conflict. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi has declared that it could not accept the proposal made by the United States to hold a conference in order to examine ways of applying the Geneva Conventions, a proposal which had been transmitted by the ICRC. The same ministry has acknowledged receiving various communications from the ICRC, in particular the nominal roll of 19 North Vietnamese seamen captured by the US Navy in the Gulf of Tonkin and the two reports drawn up following on visits made to these seamen by ICRC delegates.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has condemned the seizing by American forces in the territorial waters of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam of the crews of Vietnamese fishing vessels. It has stated that the North Vietnam Government demands the release of these Vietnamese nationals, including the 19 seamen mentioned above.

A previous statement made by a Ministry spokesman estimated that 150 nationals of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, both civilian and military, were thus being held by the American forces.

The ICRC, which has already visited the 19 seamen captured at the beginning of July of this year, is at present attempting to trace other persons who may be detained in similar conditions.

**Yemen**

As the *International Review* mentioned in its previous issue, the ICRC has resumed its medical activity in the Yemen. Because of the deplorable health situation in the North of the country, it has even decided to intensify it. Three new doctors, Drs. René Liechti, Martin Escher, André Frank and a male nurse, Mr. Rolf Wagner, left at the end of December and were installed in North-East and North-West Yemen by Mr. André Rochat, Head of the ICRC Delegation.

Thus, at the beginning of 1967, the delegation consists of twelve persons, all of Swiss nationality, of whom five are doctors and five are nurses.

The ICRC's medical teams are working in distant mountainous areas. They are carrying out their task in most difficult conditions, far from their bases in a country lacking in food and medical supplies where the situation is decidedly unstable.

## Laos

Dr. Jürg Baer, doctor-delegate of the ICRC, has been present at several distributions of relief organized by the Laotian Red Cross for victims of the Mekong river floods, thanks to contributions from sister Societies transmitted by the League. As a general rule, the Laotian Red Cross has handed over the following items to each homeless family: 1 mat, 1 mosquito net, 2 boxes of insecticide, 1 quinine bag and a gift box containing an assortment of food and toys.

Amongst these contributions mention should be made of a Soviet donation comprising 23 cases of medicines which the Ambassador of the USSR officially handed over to Dr. Oudom Souvannavong, President of the Laotian Red Cross.

## Nigeria

The Delegate General of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Africa, Mr. Georg Hoffmann, has completed a tour in the Northern region of Nigeria where serious disturbances took place. He went to a number of places including Kaduna, Zaria and Kano. He examined ways and means in which the ICRC could intervene in favour of the victims of these events. Previously the Delegate General went to Enugu, the provincial capital of the Eastern region. In the course of his mission, the ICRC delegate had discussions with local Red Cross leaders and representatives of the authorities.

In Lagos and the various regions visited, he examined in co-operation with the National Society, measures appropriate to establishing an inter-regional service for the tracing of missing persons.

## Venezuela

Mr. Pierre Jequier, ICRC Delegate General for Latin America, was authorized by the Government of Venezuela to visit persons arrested following the political disturbances which occurred in the country. He met eighteen of these detainees in the Cuartel San Carlos prison in Caracas. Most of them were communist leaders or guerilleros captured during police operations. The ICRC representative was able to interview them freely concerning conditions of detention.

The President of the Venezuelan Red Cross, Mrs. Alvarez, gave active support to Mr. Jequier's application to obtain the necessary authorization for this visit.

## Latin America

The International Committee of the Red Cross took part in the VIIIth Inter-American Red Cross Conference which was held in November at Bogota, the capital of Colombia. It was represented by Mr. Pierre Jequier, Delegate General for Latin America, who delivered an address on the activities and mission of the ICRC as a neutral intermediary in the event of conflict.

The Conference adopted a number of resolutions, one of which stressed the need for the National Societies to support ICRC activity. Of the other resolutions, mention must be made of that which reaffirmed the fundamental Red Cross principles, particularly the principle of independence.

Before going to Bogota, Mr. Jequier had attended, as an observer, the Inter-American Seminar of the Junior Red Cross on health education in Quito (Ecuador). The many subjects dealt with included dissemination of the Red Cross principles and of knowledge on the Geneva Conventions, the importance of which was recognized by the sixteen National Societies taking part in the meeting. The closing session in plenum was the occasion of a tribute to the ICRC for its activities in Latin America.

## Hungary

The neutral Commission of Experts appointed by the International Committee of the Red Cross to examine cases of victims of pseudo-medical experiments carried out in concentration camps

under the Nazi regime—to whom the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to pay compensation—again met in Geneva. The Chairman was Mr. William Lenoir, a judge of the Geneva Court, who succeeded Professor Jean Graven in this office. He was assisted, like his predecessor, by Dr. Alex Muller, a professor at the Geneva University Faculty of Medicine, and by Dr. Sylvain Mutrux, Assistant Medical Director of the Bel-Air psychiatric clinic.

Files relating to a further group of 36 Hungarian victims were submitted to the Commission, which accepted 34 and rejected 2. The Hungarian Red Cross had compiled these files in co-operation with an ICRC mission consisting of Mr. Jean-Pierre Maunoir, Delegate, and Dr. Félix Züst, Doctor Delegate.

This programme, in which the ICRC's rôle is that of a neutral intermediary, began in 1961. Under this scheme, financial assistance has been granted so far to 552 Polish and Hungarian victims of pseudo-medical experiments. The total paid out amounts to DM. 17,500,000.

## Germany

In conformity with Resolution XXI on the "Reuniting of dispersed families", which was unanimously adopted by the XXth International Conference of the Red Cross in October 1965 in Vienna, the International Committee of the Red Cross has again taken up with the relevant authorities the cause of families dispersed in the different sectors of Berlin so that, as in previous years, those living in the Western sector might visit relatives living in the East of the city.

This Resolution on the reuniting of families expresses, in particular, "the wish that all competent Red Cross bodies and all governments continue and intensify their efforts in order to complete this humanitarian action, which serves the cause of understanding and peace". In addition, it "recommends that, until such reunions are achieved, human contacts between members of dispersed families be facilitated".

The ICRC had already undertaken similar negotiations in previous years.