

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## THE ICRC AND THE EVENTS IN BIZERTA

The following statement was communicated to the press by the ICRC with regard to its recent mission to Bizerta.

August 29, 1961.—*In connection with an enquiry which the Tunisian Government proposes to undertake concerning violations of the law of nations of which Tunisian nationals are alleged to have been victims during the recent events in Bizerta, a certain number of newspapers inaccurately quoted the statement made by a spokesman of the ICRC by saying that : " it did not propose to take part in such an enquiry which would obviously be used for political ends."*

*Confronted by such a presentation of facts which need to be corrected, the International Committee of the Red Cross wishes to draw attention to its permanent line of conduct in such cases.*

*The ICRC is prepared to receive all complaints concerning violations of the law of nations, or of the main humanitarian principles and to forward them to the party concerned. On the other hand, when requests for establishing or making enquiries into such violations are concerned, the ICRC has rigidly followed the line of conduct which was already clearly defined in a Memorandum in September 1939 and communicated on several occasions to governments, namely, that the ICRC cannot itself undertake an enquiry on violations of international law. At the very most it could nominate for this purpose members of a commission of enquiry not belonging to the International Committee, provided the two parties concerned agree to make such a request. In addition, the Geneva Conventions do not make provision for the participation of the ICRC in such enquiries.*

*The ICRC has adopted this attitude with the sole intention of ensuring the continuity of its humanitarian action, which consists*

*in constantly intervening with the two parties to the conflict in order to ameliorate the condition of the victims in their power.*

*It can thus be seen that, however much disapproval there may be of acts against the rules of law and of humanity, the ICRC is obliged, by reason of its charitable mission, to abstain from setting itself up to be either an investigator or a judge.*

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#### ICRC AID TO THE RESETTLED POPULATION IN ALGERIA

August 24, 1961.—*A delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited Algeria in June and July in order to examine, with the French Red Cross in particular, how the aid to the resettled population could be continued and intensified. This relief action applies especially to women and children in the resettlement centres. New plans for distribution provide for the co-operation of mobile teams of nurses and of local committees of the French Red Cross.*

*To date, donations transmitted by the ICRC to the resettled population in Algeria exceed one million Swiss francs. They are comprised of various provisions (powdered and condensed milk, sugar, soups, cocoa), medicaments (multivitamins, cold-liver-oil, ophthalmological drops and ointment), soap, blankets, baby's napkins, fabrics and clothing for children.*

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