

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EFFORTS OF THE ICRC ON BEHALF OF FRENCH PRISONERS OF THE ALN

While continuing its numerous efforts on behalf of Algerians detained by the French authorities in Algeria and France, the International Committee of the Red Cross has continued to intervene with the Algerian nationalists on behalf of Frenchmen who have fallen into their hands. These efforts are usually made through a representative of the "Algerian Red Crescent", in Geneva, a body which is not officially recognized but with which the ICRC maintains working relations for the benefit of the victims of the conflict. On different occasions the ICRC has also intervened directly in Tunis with members of the GPRA and senior officers of the "Algerian Red Crescent".

Thus, during 1961, the ICRC made representations on two occasions in Tunis, where a delegate, Mr. Pierre Gaillard, went in March and where Miss M. van Berchem, a member of the Committee, accompanied by Mr. Gaillard, undertook a mission at the end of November. The aim of these interventions was to remind the GPRA of the exact obligations resulting from its adherence to the Geneva Conventions, in particular the necessity to communicate the names of prisoners captured to the ICRC in Geneva and to send news to the families of the captives through the Central Tracing Agency. Since the end of 1959 the ICRC had obtained no news of missing French presumed to be prisoners of the ALN.

In February 1961 the French military authorities advised the ICRC of the disappearance of some soldiers probably captured during an engagement on the defence line near the Tunisian frontier. What the ICRC emissaries in Tunis had to do was to obtain confirmation of these captures. Up to the last days of 1961 no precise information had been given with the exception of some verbal assurances, but on December 30, the ICRC received the news that the GPRA had decided to make a gesture of clemency by releasing two French soldiers.

The Central Tracing Agency at the ICRC headquarters immediately communicated the names of the two men to their families and on the same evening of the 30th, Mr. Gaillard went to Tunis. On the next day he took charge of the two prisoners and handed them over to the French authorities.

The two men did not complain about the conditions of their capture or detention but they deplored the fact that, for almost a year, they had not been able to communicate either with their families or with the ICRC. The latter, which is delighted at this release, has nevertheless insisted that the three other prisoners, whose names were supplied by the two soldiers who had been released, be allowed by the GPRA to write to their families without delay, through the Central Tracing Agency.

THE ICRC IN KATANGA

THE ICRC AND THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS IN KATANGA

Whilst the Swedish Government and the United Nations were making their representations, the International Committee of the Red Cross actively contributed to the release of the fifteen members of the UNO forces (eleven Swedes, two Norwegians and two Irish) prisoners of the Katangans, who were exchanged for thirty-three