

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

### News Items

#### In Algeria and in France

The ICRC's humanitarian activity on behalf of the victims of the conflict covers various fields: visits to prisons and places of detention in France and Algeria, representations to the authorities of penal establishments, and the question of the resettlement centres.

In France, the adoption by the Government at the end of November 1961 of the political regime, so-called "régime A", for prisoners incarcerated as a result of the Algerian conflict, was followed up less than three months later by visits from ICRC delegates to various establishments. Made with the authorization of the French Government, these visits were in compliance with requests submitted by those under detention.

Between February 12 and 16, delegates of the ICRC thus visited the prisons of the Grandes and Petites Baumettes at Marseilles, where they spoke with FLN detainees as well as with French activists all held under "régime A". The delegates also went to the Thol (Ain) punishment centre and the administrative internment camp at Larzac (Aveyron).

During the second half of February the prisons at Périgueux, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Foix and Montauban, and the punishment camp at Mauzac (Dordogne), in which members of the MNA are detained, were also visited.

Furthermore, the ICRC has continued to transmit to the benevolent funds of Algerians detained in France and in Algeria, the amounts which have been remitted to it for this purpose.

The resident-delegate of the ICRC in Algeria has actively continued to take steps resulting from the observations and suggestions contained in the report of the ICRC's XIth Mission in that country, which had been handed to the French Government at the beginning of January. The ICRC representative had in particular long discussions on February 13 with Mr. Jean Morin, Delegate General of the French Government.

### **Aid to French prisoners in the hands of the ALN**

Since the release on December 31, 1961, thanks to the persistent efforts made by the ICRC, of two French prisoners held by the ALN since January 1961, the ICRC has continued to take steps to enable three other prisoners, still in captivity, to write to their families, which they have not been permitted to do for more than a year. The ICRC has handed family message forms to the detaining authorities for this purpose in accordance with the practice of the Central Tracing Agency. So far none of these steps has led to any result.

A series of representations have been made on behalf of one prisoner held by the ALN in an area close to the Moroccan frontier, who has been prevented from sending news to his family since 1959.

These four men are the only prisoners in FLN hands whose names are known to the ICRC. Enquiries have been opened in more than 400 other cases, whilst the French Government has drawn up a nominal roll of more than 350 posted as missing. The ICRC has up to the present still been unsuccessful in obtaining any other list.

### **Cultural Relief**

The ICRC is at present despatching additional cultural material for Algerians detained in France. This consists chiefly of books in Arabic, copies of the Koran, grammars and literary works.

The ICRC had already distributed in 1960 and 1961 cultural relief, consisting of school text books and assorted literature in French and Arabic, in some thirty places of detention in France for detained Algerians.

### **Following the death of Georges Olivet and his companions**

We wrote in our last issue that Mr. Thant, Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr. Léopold Boissier, President of the ICRC, had reached rapid agreement on the setting up of the impartial and independent commission of enquiry into the circumstances of the death of the ICRC delegate, Mr. Georges Olivet and of the two Katanga Red Cross workers, Mrs. Vroonen and Mr. Smeding. It will be remembered that the ICRC had asked UNO to open proceedings to endeavour to

throw some light on the tragic event which, in December 1961, cost the lives of these three people.

The commission is composed of three personalities whose names we have already published. The ICRC and UNO are both represented on this commission by observers. Judge Lukas Burckhardt, from Basle, has been chosen as the ICRC's observer.

The commission met from February 6 to 8 in Geneva. Its members were welcomed by Mr. Spinelli, Director of the European Office of the United Nations, representing the Acting Secretary-General, and by the President of the ICRC. The commission's mandate was defined during these preliminary meetings and the documents available in Geneva were studied.

The commission left Geneva on Friday, February 9 and arrived in Elisabethville the following day where it immediately began its work.

In the delicate task entrusted to it, the commission has been assured of the co-operation of all interested parties. The ICRC has also received an assurance from President Tshombe, that every facility would be accorded it on the Katanga side, and that it would have access to the results of the enquiry already opened by the Katanga Legal authorities.

In Elisabethville the commission collected a considerable amount of evidence and information concerning the drama which has cast gloom over the Red Cross world. The members of the commission have just returned to Geneva where they have held a meeting on the subject, although their final report cannot be expected before several weeks.

Since no equipment existed locally enabling a thorough examination of the bodies to be made, the mortal remains of the three victims have been transported to Vienna where the work will be continued at the Institute of Forensic Medicine whose director, Professor Leopold Breitenecker, is a member of the commission. A brief and moving ceremony took place at the Elisabethville airport, UNO troops paying the last honours to the bodies as they left. Senior United Nations officials, the chief of protocol of the Government and officers of the Katanga army were also present.

### **The ICRC in Katanga**

The ICRC delegate in Katanga, Mr. G. C. Senn, left for Kongolo at the end of January, to distribute foodstuffs and medical supplies to the civilian population. However, he was not able to continue his journey beyond Stanleyville, as the Congolese Authorities did not consider they could guarantee his safety in Kongolo, where serious disorders had broken out shortly beforehand and missionaries had been massacred. During an interview with General Lundula, Commander-in-Chief of the Congolese Forces in Orientale Province, Mr. Senn insisted on being allowed to go on to Kongolo, but finally had to renounce this plan. Never-

theless, he took steps to have 17 nuns and 47 seminarists evacuated from Kongolo.

Shortly afterwards, the ICRC delegate went to Manono, in North Katanga, where in co-operation with United Nations representatives, he handed over medicaments to the population and the local hospital.

The ICRC has also just sent a consignment from Geneva to Elisabethville, consisting of 60,000 pills for the treatment of tuberculosis. The supplies are intended for an anti-tuberculosis campaign in West Katanga.

### **The mission of the ICRC in Central Africa**

Mr. S. Gonard, Vice-President of the ICRC, charged with a study mission in Central Africa, visited the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Kenya. He then went to Dar-es-Salaam, capital of Tanganyika.

Mr. Gonard, who is accompanied by Mr. Georges Hoffmann, delegate of the ICRC, has had a number of talks in these countries with the civil and military authorities, as well as with the local Red Cross organizations. These talks dealt with ways of ensuring a certain amount of protection, without any discrimination whatsoever, for the victims of international or internal conflicts which might break out in Africa.

### **Following the Goa conflict**

The International Committee has been authorized by the Portuguese Government to visit Indian nationals interned in the Portuguese overseas territories as a result of the conflict in Goa. It designated Mr. Robert Guinand to make these visits in Mozambique and Mr. Jacques Ruff in Macao. The latter visited 53 Indian nationals interned in the Portuguese territory of Macao, following the Goa episode.

Mr. Ruff then went to New Delhi where he obtained the Indian Government's permission to make a further visit to Portuguese prisoners and internees in Goa. Accompanied by an Indian Red Cross representative, he proceeded to Goa and has begun a tour of the internment camps. These prisoners and internees had previously been visited by an ICRC delegate in December a few days after the ending of military operations. Furthermore Mr. Robert Guinand, delegate of the ICRC has arrived in Lourenço Marques to visit Indian nationals interned in this territory of Portuguese East Africa. He began an extensive tour of the internment camps in February.

It should be added that the Indian Red Cross has sent the ICRC lists of wounded Portuguese prisoners and killed during the military operations in Goa, Diu and Damao. The total number of killed is given as 13. These lists have been immediately transmitted to the Portuguese Red Cross at Lisbon.

## **The ICRC in Laos**

The fighting in the Southern provinces of Laos on the borders of Burma and China, has sparked off a further influx of refugees and large numbers of civilians have arrived in the royal capital of Luang-Prabang. They come on foot, by canoe, helicopter and plane, but they all have one thing in common, an urgent need of relief supplies.

To meet these increased needs, the ICRC has raised a fresh credit of 50,000 Swiss francs on its relief funds, which brings to more than 200,000 Swiss francs the total devoted by the International Committee to assisting the victims of the conflict, particularly some 10,000 refugees who left the danger zones and withdrew to the Mekong valley.

ICRC delegate, Dr. Jürg Baer, immediately organised, in co-operation with the Laotian Red Cross, distributions of clothing, blankets and milk (gifts from the French Red Cross and the Children's Funds).

The Queen was present at the distribution on January 23. She also watched parcels being handed to the sick and wounded, and blood plasma and blankets (gifts from the Netherlands Red Cross) being handed over to the directorate of the hospitals.

On January 29 and 30, the ICRC delegate organised other distributions in Paksé, Sedone province, in Southern Laos, on behalf of Kha refugees who had arrived at the beginning of the year.

The ICRC has also made arrangements to send 35 cases of medical supplies to the Laotian Red Cross at Xieng-Khouang (seat of Prince Souvanna Phouma's Government). These supplies were gifts from the Polish, Indian and Swiss Red Cross Societies. This consignment will be delivered through the intermediary of the Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

## **Repatriation of Koreans resident in Japan**

The departure of Koreans resident in Japan and wishing to be repatriated to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was renewed at the beginning of 1962, but at a reduced rate. The 86th convoy which sailed from the Japanese port of Niigata in January consisted of less than 100 persons. At the beginning of the repatriation operations, more than one thousand Koreans left Japan each week.

## **The Events in New Guinea**

Following on the incident which took place on January 15 last in the waters of the ARU islands between units of the Indonesian and Netherlands naval forces, the Netherlands Government, responding to an appeal made by the Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, agreed to release Indonesian nationals captured during this engagement. This

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agreement took place shortly after the ICRC, carrying out its customary rôle, had obtained a list of the prisoners concerned and the authorization to visit all Indonesians detained in New Guinea.

The Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations having requested the support of the International Committee, the latter instructed its delegate general for Asia, Mr. André Durand, to proceed to New Guinea in order to visit interned Indonesians and to make immediate arrangements for the transport and repatriation of prisoners entitled to benefit from the agreement made between Mr. Thant and the Netherlands Government.

The ICRC delegate arrived in Hollandia on February 12 and has visited the 52 Indonesian prisoners captured as a result of the naval engagement of January 15, and he has also visited a certain number of Indonesian civilian internees who had infiltrated into New Guinea and been arrested by the Netherlands authorities during 1960-1961.

### Guests of the ICRC

During the second half of January, the ICRC was privileged to welcome several personalities to its headquarters, amongst whom: Mr. R. W. Furlonger, the new Permanent Representative of Australia to the International Organisations in Geneva; Mr. Niels Hansen, Councillor at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Berne; Mrs. H. J. Lynch, of the Victoria Section of the Australian Red Cross; Miss Sheila M. Quinn, Director of the "Social and Economic Welfare Division" of the International Nursing Council; Mr. E. Haas, Director of Swiss Television and Advisor to the ICRC on television questions, together with some of his principal colleagues; two representatives of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Zöfelt and Mr. Riemenschneider; four Swiss army Officers, Colonel Albisetti, Colonel K. H. Schaeffer, Colonel C. Schaeffer and Major Weidmann, on a study visit to the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

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