

contacts with the various countries visited by the mission, and in which it was so enthusiastically received, which shows how much the services of the Red Cross are everywhere recognized and appreciated.

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SUNDRY ACTIVITIES

**News Items**

**Congo**

Mr. G. C. Senn, delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross recently visited the central prison of Stanleyville, chief town of the Orientale Province of the Congo (formerly Belgian). At the time of the visit there were a total of 800 prisoners amongst whom numbered one hundred Katanga gendarmes captured by the National Congolese Army. There were in addition some thirty Congolese political detainees, the remainder being prisoners of common law. On this occasion Mr. Senn was given considerable facilities by the local authorities and especially by General Lundula, Commander of the Congolese forces stationed in Orientale Province. He received the nominal roll of the Katanga detainees which he transmitted to the military authorities of Elisabethville, which in turn informed the families concerned. He is awaiting replies from the latter which he will pass on to the prisoners.

Following on this visit, the ICRC delegate made representations with the Congolese central Government at Léopoldville for the purpose of releasing and repatriating Katanga military prisoners. He has considered the possibility of arranging for an exchange of the latter against Congolese prisoners detained in Katanga.

Shortly afterwards, Mr. Senn again went to Elisabethville where he examined various humanitarian questions with the Katanga authorities. He was present at the closing of the camp which had sheltered several thousands of Baluba refugees. These have been repatriated to Kasai by UNO.

The delegate also visited the prison of Matadi, the port on the lower reaches of the Congo river, in the Léopoldville region, where the detainees included a certain number of Angolan refugees whose condition particularly attracted his attention. He was able to speak freely to them.

### THE CASE OF A RED CROSS AIRCRAFT FIRED AT FROM THE GROUND

The recent news of the firing by Congolese forces on an aircraft with red cross markings has caused a certain amount of dismay to international opinion. This concerned a machine flying for the Katanga Red Cross, but since the ICRC had taken part in organizing these flights, it would be as well to state the conditions in which the incident occurred.

In April of this year, the Katanga Red Cross requested Mr. G. C. Senn, ICRC delegate in the Congo, to help organize an aerial relief service on behalf of refugees of North Katanga origin. Extremely heavy rains had in fact rendered transport on land very difficult, if not impossible. But as these aircraft had to fly over areas not occupied by the Katanga forces, it was necessary to obtain the agreement of the United Nations. Mr. Senn therefore participated in the conclusion of an agreement with the UNO representatives, by virtue of which these aircraft would be used exclusively for purposes of humanitarian relief.

This arrangement indeed remained in force for two months to everyone's satisfaction. The attack on the Red Cross aircraft by the Congolese forces in the Kabalo region on August 2 seemed to have been an incident of no great seriousness. In fact visibility was poor on that day and it is most probable the protective emblem could not be observed from the ground.

### On behalf of Missing Persons in Algeria

The International Committee of the Red Cross, whose specific task it is to aid the victims of international and civilian conflicts, has reduced its activity in Algeria since the proclamation of independence. At present Red Cross relief actions are largely carried out by the League of Red Cross Societies, federation of all the National Societies, which is a body devoted to peace-time activities.

However, the ICRC is continuing its task in Algeria in spheres in which its function as neutral intermediary is required. Thus it deals with cases of missing persons, for the most part of European origin. Since the "cease fire", it has been advised of more than one thousand of such cases, about which its delegates have made many representations. Thus Mr. Roger Vust, permanent delegate in Algiers has met Mr. Abderrahman Farès, President of the provisional Executive, whilst Mr. Jacques de Heller, delegate, had dealings with Mr. Ben Bella, President of the Political Bureau. The two delegates obtained some assurances from those with whom they spoke but, so far, only a few persons have been found and released.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The ICRC on the other hand has continued, to a limited extent, its relief activity chiefly in Algiers and Oran on behalf of undernourished children. Since the beginning of July it has had 30 tons of unskimmed powdered milk and 17½ tons of semi-skim milk in powder transported to Algiers, and 10 tons of unskimmed milk, 2½ tons of semi-skim milk, 2 tons of sugar and 3 tons of cheese to Oran. The value of these consignments exceeds 270,000 Swiss francs.

### **The ICRC and the Kurdish Problem**

Information has been supplied to the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning the fate of 17 members of the Iraqi armed forces captured by Kurdish rebels. These are for the most part officers who have filled in "capture cards". These documents have been transmitted to the ICRC which has in turn forwarded them to the Baghdad authorities through the intermediary of the Iraqi Red Cross. The ICRC has taken this occasion of expressing the wish to obtain similar information concerning the fate of prisoners and internees of Kurdish origin, who might fall into the hands of the Iraqi Government.

### **Release of detainees in Laos**

The delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Jacques Ruff, was present at the release of prisoners (five Americans and one Filipino) held by the Pathet Lao. The ICRC had previously concerned itself in the fate of these prisoners. In November 1961, its delegate-general in the Far East, Mr. André Durand, had visited four of the American prisoners in the Plaine des Jarres and had made representations on behalf of the fifth, who had been wounded. He had been successful in arranging for family news and parcels to reach them.

The Central Tracing Agency, at the ICRC headquarters in Geneva, is still receiving requests for information concerning other foreign nationals missing in Laos and about whom it is attempting to obtain news. These representations have been continuing since the signing of the recent agreements on Laos.

On the other hand, Mr. Ruff was present at the release in Vientiane of six prisoners of Vietnamese nationality. Four of those chose to proceed to the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam. We should add that the ICRC representative made a further visit to the camp of interned Laotian prisoners at Savannakhet. He distributed medicaments to them.

### **Assistance to Netherlands Nationals in Indonesia**

The Indonesian Red Cross has just made a third distribution of pensions and allowances paid by the Netherlands Government

to Netherlands nationals remaining in the archipelago. The ICRC acted as intermediary in transmitting these funds, which the Netherlands Government had sent it, to Djakarta. This third distribution amounted to about 100,000 dollars.

### **The ICRC and assistance to the wounded in Berlin**

After the recent incidents in Berlin and its suburbs, a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. H. G. Beckh, has, for several days, had talks with leading personalities of both the East and the West. He spoke, in particular, with Dr. Werner Ludwig, President of the German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic and with Dr. Dietrich Blos, President of the Berlin Section of the German Red Cross in the German Federal Republic.

In the course of these conversations, undertaken with a view to resolving the humanitarian problems arising from these events, the ICRC was informed by the two parties of the measures they had decided upon to aid the wounded.

After hearing both points of view of this subject, the International Committee of the Red Cross was pleased to note that each party recognises the obligation to bring immediate assistance and first-aid to the wounded on its own territory, it being understood that such aid must not be hindered by the other party.

The ICRC welcomes the declarations made by the two parties who have thus confirmed their intention to conform to the letter and to the spirit of the Geneva Conventions of which they are signatories.

The ICRC trusts that these declarations, made by the responsible authorities concerned will furnish the necessary basis to allow for first aid to be given to the wounded in the event of similar incidents.

Such a guarantee will without doubt help to ease the situation and corresponds with the desire of the International Red Cross to contribute towards the lessening of tension and to mutual understanding.

### **Conference on international law**

Invited to take part in the 50th Conference of the International Law Association which was recently held in Brussels, the International Committee of the Red Cross was represented there by Mr. J.-P. Schoenholzer, member of the legal department. The International Law Association is a non-governmental body con-

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<sup>1</sup> As regards the position of the acts which has given rise to divergences of opinion between the two parties, these have naturally retained entire freedom to make their own communications to the press.

sisting of legal experts from most countries in the world. It was founded in Brussels in 1873.

The ICRC representative was first of all present at meetings of the Commission of Medical International Law which studied the methods of strengthening the protection of members of the medical and auxiliary professions, as well as of their buildings and installations, particularly in the case of conflicts not of an international character. He then attended meetings of the Commission of the United Nations Charter, whose task it was to examine the problems raised by the use of prohibited weapons and by those of self-defence. Some held the view that a country which had been unjustly attacked could defend itself by every possible means and was not necessarily bound to apply the rules of war, notably the Geneva Conventions. Mr. Schoenholzer successfully defended the theory according to which a State, even when a victim of unjustified aggression, must apply the Geneva Conventions in all types of conflict.

### Guests of the ICRC

From mid-July until the second week of August the ICRC received several personalities at its headquarters including the following in particular: Mr. Ashley Strong, former Chapter Chairman for First Aid of the Northern Otsego Chapter of the American Red Cross; Dr. Malméjac, deputy Delegate General of the French Red Cross in Algeria; Mrs. L. Alvarez, President of the Nursing Association of the Philippines; Mrs. L. Gueye, Vice-President of the provisional Committee of the Senegalese Red Cross, accompanied by Mr. A. N'Diaye, first secretary of the Embassy of Senegal in Berne; Mr. José A. Egas, Secretary-General of the Junior Red Cross of Ecuador; Miss H. Lung, former President of the Committee of Algiers of the French Red Cross; Mr. Nuri Omran, administrative director of the Iraqi Red Crescent; Mr. R. Patin, technical adviser of the Volta Red Cross (being formed).

During this same period the ICRC also welcomed numerous groups of visitors amongst whom we mention the following: students of the Republic of Vietnam, introduced by the "Pro Helvetia" Foundation; members of the "Europäische Aktionsgemeinschaft" from Bonn; members of the YMCA who had come from New York and Sacramento (California); undergraduates and students from Nijmegen (Netherlands); clergymen of the American Methodist Church; a group of African diplomats attending the course arranged for them by the United Nations Organization; participants in courses at the Geneva Summer School of Democratic Studies, and pupils of the Ecole Benedict of Neuchâtel.