

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Middle East

Visits to prisoners of war

ICRC delegates in Israel and the Arab countries have, in recent weeks, made several visits to prisoners of war. As usual, they talked with them without witnesses. In accordance with the established practice, reports are sent to the detaining authorities and to the prisoners' own governments.

In Israel, on 28 November, the ICRC delegates visited the 112 Arab servicemen interned in the Sarafand military camp, 61 Egyptians, 41 Syrians and 10 Lebanese. On 30 November, the delegates visited five interned Syrian officers.

In the Arab Republic of Egypt, the ten Israeli prisoners of war held in the Abassieh military prison were visited on 30 November.

In Syria, the ICRC delegate visited two Israeli prisoners of war on 2 December. The third Israeli prisoner of war, who was sick on the day of the visit, was seen by the delegate on 9 December.

Family reuniting

Two family reuniting operations took place under the auspices of the ICRC, on 29 November and 6 December.

The first of these operations, at Roshanikra, enabled two civilians from Lebanon to join their families on the Golan Heights. The second, at El Qantara, enabled 115 persons to cross over to the west bank of the Suez Canal, and 107 to cross over to the east bank.

Yemen Arab Republic

On 22 November, the ICRC delegate in the Yemen Arab Republic visited the four South Yemeni servicemen captured on 18 October.

A few days later, he had access to one of the three sections of the Sana'a Citadel, where he saw and distributed relief supplies to some 170 prisoners.

Asian Sub-Continent

On 1 December 1972, in the presence of an ICRC representative, the simultaneous repatriation of the 616 Indian prisoners of war held in Pakistan and of the 540 Pakistani prisoners of war captured by the Indian armed forces on the west front, took place at the Wagah frontier post.

East Africa

The Regional Delegate for East Africa was in Mauritius from 24 October to 14 November 1972. Besides having talks with Red Cross leaders he was received by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Justice, Health and Education, with whom he conferred about the ICRC's activities in Africa, particularly about the introduction of humanitarian law in universities and the use of the school textbook in schools and of the "Soldier's Manual" within the armed forces. He stressed the importance which the ICRC attached to African countries' participation in the 1974 Diplomatic Conference.

West Africa

On 7 December 1972, the President of GRAE (Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile) informed the ICRC that his movement proposed to release two Portuguese who had been captured in December 1966 and January 1967. Pursuant to GRAE's request, the ICRC instructed its Regional Delegate for West and Central Africa, based at Yaoundé, to proceed to Kinshasa, where GRAE had its seat. Following talks with GRAE and the Zairian authorities, it was agreed that one of the prisoners should return to

Portugal and that the other should join his family in Angola. On 13 December, the former was flown to Portugal, and on the following day the ICRC delegate escorted the latter to Noqui, on the Zairian-Angolan border.

Haiti

Mr. S. Nessi, ICRC Delegate General for Latin America, returned on 7 December 1972 from the mission to Latin America which had started in October. On the last lap of his mission, the Delegate General stayed in Haiti from 26 November to 3 December. He had talks with Red Cross leaders and made a statement on the ICRC's activities at a meeting of the Society's governing board. With the Minister of Health and the President of the National Society, he attended the inauguration of a Red Cross blood transfusion centre at Cayes, in the south, on 30 November. The equipment for the centre was bought with a sum allocated from the Empress Shoken Fund administered by the League and the ICRC.

Mr. Nessi conferred also with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Health and Communications, mainly on the question of ICRC inspection of places of detention.

Colombia

The ICRC delegate and doctor continued their mission to Andean countries. From 20 November to 14 December, they stayed in Colombia, where they were granted general authorization by the Ministry of the Interior to visit the prisons for which it was responsible. They visited thirteen places of detention in the capital and the provinces and saw several thousand detainees, including a few dozen held for reasons or offences of a political nature.

Northern Ireland

On 13 and 14 December, two delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross, one of them a doctor, again visited the Long Kesh Centre, now known as the Maze Prison. As in previous instances, the visit had the full concurrence of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The delegates' visit to all

detainees now held in the Maze Prison was subject to no restrictions; they conversed in private with whoever they wished. As customary, the ICRC's report is sent direct to the Government of the United Kingdom through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

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Visits to political detainees

An up-to-date statistical survey of ICRC visits to political detainees from 1958 to 1972 shows the following facts.

During this period, International Committee delegates visited political detainees in 65 countries where internal disturbances or tension (other than actual armed conflicts) have occurred or still exist. They made more than 1,300 visits to some 630 places of detention in those countries. The number of detainees seen is estimated to have been more than a hundred thousand.

IN GENEVA

A Resignation from the International Committee

At its plenary meeting on 14 December 1972, the International Committee of the Red Cross took note with keen regret of the resignation of Mr. Jacques Freymond, a member of the ICRC for many years.

Since his appointment in January 1959, he had constantly participated in the work of the Committee, particularly as a member of the Presidential Council. He was an invaluable asset to the Committee, a source of sound advice, with broad experience of the international scene.