

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Latin America

Chile

During April 1974, the ICRC delegation in Chile continued its activities on behalf of detainees and their families.

ICRC delegates and doctors visited some twenty places of detention and saw more than 2,800 detainees. As in previous months, the ICRC provided the detainees with material relief consisting mainly of medicaments, blankets, mattresses and working implements.

For the needy families of detainees, the ICRC is developing the plan of assistance which was launched in January and to which a sum of 100,000 Swiss francs has been assigned. About 2,000 families (or more than 8,000 persons) are thus supplied with food, clothing, blankets and various other relief items.

Uruguay

Visits to places of detention

From 25 March to 10 April 1974, the ICRC regional delegate for Latin America, accompanied by a delegate, was in Uruguay and there met the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, the Director-General of Prisons and various civilian and military authorities.

The two ICRC delegates visited four civilian prisons in Montevideo, where they saw more than 2,500 detainees, including about a hundred who were being held for offences or reasons of a political nature. In two prisons, the delegates provided medicaments. The ICRC delegates also had contacts with leaders of the National Red Cross Society during their stay in Montevideo.

Asian Sub-Continent

The repatriation of Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian internees in India, which began under the auspices of the ICRC on 28 September 1973, following the New Delhi Agreement, was completed on 30 April 1974. During that time, 105 special trains conveyed 72,795 Pakistani prisoners of war and 17,186 civilian internees. Since February 1972, ICRC delegates have paid 424 visits to some fifty Indian internment camps, and the ICRC Central Tracing Agency has transmitted 15 million Red Cross messages between prisoners and their families.

With the end of repatriation operations between India and Pakistan, the ICRC delegations in those two countries have been reduced. As from 30 April, each is composed of five persons, whereas the New Delhi and Islamabad delegations comprised up to fifteen and twenty-one respectively (apart from local personnel).

In Bangladesh, the ICRC is maintaining its present force of sixteen delegates as the transfer operations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, conducted jointly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have not yet ended. On 30 April, 83,931 Pakistanis returned to Pakistan, while 117,514 Bengalis left Pakistan for Bangladesh. These operations are continuing at the rate of several flights a day.

From 24 March to 25 April 1974, Mr. N. Vecsey, Deputy Director of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency, went to the three countries of the Asian sub-continent to prepare for the winding up of the bureaux of the ICRC Agency when their activities come to an end.

First in Pakistan and then in Bangladesh and India, Mr. Vecsey met officers of the Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies and conferred with them on various problems connected with the taking over of those bureaux by the three National Societies.

Middle East

Israelo-Arab conflict

During April 1974, the ICRC continued its approaches and activities on behalf of prisoners of war.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, the authorities notified the ICRC delegation of an Israeli prisoner of war whose plane had been brought down on 20 April. The man, who is wounded, is receiving care in a hospital.

On 21 April, ICRC delegates visited two wounded Israeli prisoners of war in Damascus hospital, and on 1 May sixty-three more Israeli prisoners of war. Family parcels were transmitted to them by the ICRC.

In Lebanon, on 16 April ICRC delegates made a first visit to Israeli prisoners of war who had been captured on 10 April.

Lastly, *in Israel*, two camps holding some 400 Arab prisoners of war of Syrian, Iraqi and Moroccan nationality, were visited on 3 and 10 April respectively.

The ICRC was notified by the authorities of the capture of two Syrian soldiers, on 7 and 29 April.

Prison visits in Israel and occupied territories

During March 1974, ICRC delegates visited nationals of occupied territories and various Arab countries imprisoned in Israel and the occupied territories. The twenty-eighth round of visits covered thirteen prisons (seven in Israel and six in the territories on the West Bank and in Gaza-Sinai), and approximately 2,500 civilian detainees.

The ICRC is authorized, usually one month after arrest, to see the so-called security cases (persons sentenced, charged or in preventive detention) and those sentenced or charged under ordinary law. It will be recalled that ICRC delegates do not visit Arab detainees of Israeli nationality as the Fourth Geneva Convention does not protect that category.

During their visits, delegates interview prisoners without witnesses. There is a monthly distribution of parcels containing extra food for prisoners who have had no family visit for more than three months. Lastly, the ICRC arranges for bus transport, also once a month, for the benefit of needy families who want to visit a relative in one of the places of detention.

Student transfer

On 29 April, ICRC delegates organized the transfer of seventy-six young people from Gaza to Cairo, by the El Qantara road, for study purposes.

Family reuniting operations

Under the auspices of the ICRC, a family reuniting operation took place on 10 April. Sixty-two persons went to Gaza-Sinai occupied territory while forty-five crossed over to the Valley of the Nile.

*IN GENEVA***A Course on Humanitarian Law**

A group of six army officers, from Dahomey, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Zaire, followed a course in Geneva organized jointly by the Swiss army and the International Committee of the Red Cross from 29 April to 10 May 1974.

The purpose of the course was to train army officers to disseminate, among members of the armed forces in each of the countries to which they belong, the principles of the Red Cross and of international humanitarian law. It was the first time that a course of this kind has been organized.

The officers attended the course given to Swiss army officers at the Geneva barracks.

During the five days spent at the ICRC, the trainees had several working sessions with the directors and senior officials of the ICRC and visited also the League of Red Cross Societies.

At the end of their stay in Geneva, the six officers expressed the hope that such courses would be organized for other army officers from Africa, a hope which the ICRC will endeavour to fulfil as far as possible.
