

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## **ICRC Assembly at Basle**

The Assembly of the International Committee of the Red Cross met in Basle on 2 and 3 June.

The meetings of the Assembly took place in Basle City Hall. Afterwards, the ICRC welcomed the civic authorities and representatives of the churches, the economic sectors, education and the local press, to a reception. The occasion ended with a public « round table discussion » on « The ICRC and humanitarian imperatives of today and tomorrow ». An ICRC information centre, comprising an exhibition with multi-vision equipment and a publications stand, was open to the public throughout the Assembly's deliberations, and was visited by many school parties.

In taking this step, the ICRC wished to demonstrate its links with Basle, home of more than one generous humanitarian institution — for example, it was in Basle that the central prisoner-of-war agency was set up in the war of 1870-1871 — and birth place of several eminent personalities of the Red Cross. At the same time the International Committee desired to emphasize that though its headquarters may be in Geneva and its mission completely international, it is made up of Swiss citizens, and that the material and moral support of the Swiss people is vital to enable it to perform its humanitarian activities all over the world.

## **ICRC President visits National Societies**

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, attended the centenary commemorations of two National Red Cross Societies during the month of May.

From 6 to 8 May he was in Helsinki, accompanied by Mr. R. Pestalozzi, member of the International Committee, and Mr. M. Borsinger,

delegate general for Europe, at the invitation of the Finnish Red Cross. In the course of the ceremonies, the President of the Finnish Republic bestowed on Mr. Hay the Cross of the Finnish Red Cross.

Also present in Helsinki were Mr. J. Barroso, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, and Mr. H. Beer, League Secretary General, together with representatives of many National Red Cross Societies.

From 26 to 28 May, the ICRC President was in Tokyo, invited by the Japanese Red Cross to take part in the commemorations of its centenary. Mr. Barroso too was present. The two Red Cross officials were received in private audience by His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and Her Imperial Majesty the Empress, who is President of the Japanese Red Cross, just before the opening of the centenary celebrations, which took place in the presence of Their Majesties.

## **ICRC Meeting on Medical Matters**

The ICRC Medical Division organized a seminar from 3 to 5 May at Cartigny, near Geneva, for about 50 Swiss doctors who had carried out medical missions abroad. Those taking part in the meetings included ICRC staff, members of the Swiss Red Cross and of the Swiss Disaster Relief Corps. Two Danish doctors were also invited.

The purpose of the seminar was to pool experience gained in various medical missions abroad, to put forward constructive suggestions and at the same time to provide doctors with supplementary medical data, mainly relating to hygiene, nutrition, epidemiology and tropical diseases, which might be useful for future missions.

After consideration of the practical problems arising from four ICRC missions (Nigeria/Biafra, Laos, Angola and Cambodia), each of a highly different nature, the following subjects were discussed: medical teams in disaster situations, the function of general medicine and pediatrics in emergency situations, mobile medical teams (function and efficiency), medical and nutritional aid, standardisation and storage of medicaments, the role of ICRC medical delegates in visits to places of detention.

The doctors expressed the following wishes at the conclusion of the seminar: that steps be taken to give additional training to Swiss doctors going on mission outside Switzerland and that a documentation centre