

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Africa****Rhodesia**

From 2 to 9 May, four delegates and a doctor of the ICRC made a new series of visits to places of detention in Rhodesia. They went to eight prisons, where they saw a total of 817 persons detained under the Emergency Regulations. The previous ICRC mission took place in November 1976.

Botswana

During the month of May, the ICRC delegates twice returned to the refugee camps in Francistown and Selibi Pikwe, in order to keep track of the situation from the humanitarian viewpoint and to complete their assessment of needs. A sum of 30,000 Swiss francs, granted by the ICRC to the Botswana Red Cross Society for an emergency aid programme, made possible the purchase of medicines, food and clothing and provided means to set up a Red Cross team to organize local distributions of aid.

Burundi

On 23 May, Mr. U. Bédert, ICRC regional delegate for West Africa, began a series of visits to places of detention in Burundi. He went to ten prisons holding a total of almost 2,000 detainees. Consequent on this mission, the ICRC gave 15,000 Swiss francs for continuing these visits and for the improvement of the conditions of detention, chiefly by repairs to buildings and by the purchase of supplies for the detainees. Mr. Bédert had a meeting with the Minister of Justice, to whom he reported his findings.

Tanzania

Mr. J.-F. Borel, ICRC regional delegate for East Africa, attended the first sub-regional meeting of National Youth Directors in English-speaking African countries, which took place from 24 to 27 May in Dar-es-Salaam. The event was organized jointly by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Tanzania Red Cross Society.

Tunisia

On the occasion of the national week of the Tunisian Red Crescent, the Society invited Mr. Pierre Gaillard, ICRC adviser, to give a series of lectures on the Geneva Conventions. Between 2 and 8 May Mr. Gaillard went to Tunis, Fondouk Jedid, Carthage, Sfax and Bizerta, speaking in nursing colleges, military training establishments and to the regional committees of the Red Crescent. Wherever he went he found a warm welcome, and his listeners showed their keen interest by the many questions they asked at the end of each lecture.

Latin America**Paraguay**

During May, a delegate and a doctor from the ICRC paid visits to six places of detention in Paraguay. They saw 222 persons detained for political reasons or offences. In two prisons they distributed toilet articles and food.

Chile

In May, ICRC delegates and doctors visited twelve places of detention in Chile and saw about one hundred detainees. They distributed relief supplies to a total value of 6,440 dollars, consisting mainly of medicines, eyeglasses, toilet articles, sports equipment and food. Nine consignments of medicines were also sent to prisons. Aid to needy families of detainees continued; 888 families, totalling 3,265 persons, received aid valued at 60,540 dollars during May.

Argentina

Mr. R. Jenny, ICRC regional delegate for the southern region of South America, had several meetings in May with representatives of the

Government. In particular, he met the Deputy Minister of the Interior and gave him an account of ICRC activities after the first two series of visits to places of detention in the country, carried out in recent months.

El Salvador

Mr. R. Chevalley, ICRC regional delegate, stayed in El Salvador from 11 to 24 May, and met leaders of the National Red Cross Society and members of the Government, among them the Ministers of the Interior and of Defence, to whom he described the roles and activities of the ICRC.

Asia

Thailand

From 11 to 30 May, Mr. A. Pasquier, ICRC regional delegate for South-East Asia, accompanied by a doctor provided by the Thai Red Cross Society, visited ten places of detention in Bangkok and other parts of the country. He saw 363 persons detained for political offences or reasons.

Viet Nam

Two repatriation operations by air were carried out on 18 and 23 May under the auspices of the ICRC; in this way 276 persons who had been living in Viet Nam were taken to Taipei, via Bangkok.

These flights were a continuation of the repatriation campaign organized by the ICRC in 1975 and 1976 for returning foreign residents of Viet Nam to their home countries.

Malaysia

The sum of 10,000 Swiss francs has been donated by the ICRC to help the activities of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, which is planning the construction of its new headquarters building. The National Society provides full support to the ICRC regional delegation based in Kuala Lumpur.

Iran

A series of visits to places of detention in Iran was made during April and May. Four delegates and two doctors of the ICRC visited

five places of detention in the Teheran area and fifteen others elsewhere in the country. The ICRC delegates talked without witnesses to the detainees of their choice, and had access to all the buildings in the places of detention visited. This was the first series of visits by the ICRC to places of detention in Iran.

India

Following the recent change of government in India, the ICRC regional delegate in New Delhi paid a courtesy visit to the Prime Minister, the Honourable Morarji Desai, and discussed with him the humanitarian mission of the ICRC in that part of the world.

Pakistan

Mr. D. Borel, ICRC regional delegate for the Asian sub-continent, was in Pakistan from 4 to 15 May. He met Mrs. Z. A. Bhutto, wife of the President, and leading members of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and from the Cabinet Division. One of the main subjects of discussion was the unresolved question concerning methods of transport for those persons authorized to travel from Bangladesh to Pakistan; another matter raised was the situation within the country. Mr. Borel gave two lectures on the ICRC and the Geneva Conventions in the Armed Forces Medical College.

Europe

Cyprus

The ICRC's offices in Cyprus are shortly to be closed. To announce this measure to the authorities and others, and to explain the International Committee's plans for the future, Mr. Melchior Borsinger, ICRC delegate general for Europe and North America, paid a visit to the island from 23 to 30 May. Accompanied by Mr. Georg Hoffmann, head of the Nicosia delegation, Mr. Borsinger was received by Mgr Makarios and by Mr. Rauf Denktash.

Mr. Borsinger and Mr. Hoffmann explained the reasons which led to the decision to shut down the ICRC delegation in Nicosia, while stressing that the humanitarian problems remaining to be solved would be dealt with, from 1 July 1977, from Geneva and by regular missions to Cyprus. This procedure was greeted favourably by the two parties concerned.

The two ICRC representatives also met the leaders of the Cyprus Red Cross, which will remain in direct contact with Geneva on all questions within its competence.

In addition, the two men had talks with Ambassador Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations special representative in Cyprus, and with Mr. Rémy Gorge, his principal political adviser.

Portugal

From 8 to 19 May, an ICRC delegate visited Portugal. In addition to contacts with the authorities and the National Society, he visited the military prison at Caxias, where he talked to 21 political detainees without witnesses. The ICRC donated a sum of 10,000 Swiss francs to the Portuguese Red Cross, to enable it to continue helping the needy families of detainees.

Middle East

Lebanon

The situation in Lebanon is very gradually returning to normal—apart from occasional fighting, especially in the south of the country—and the improved atmosphere has made it possible for the ICRC to establish a timetable for phasing out its relief action. Adhering to its principle of action, which is to come to the aid of war victims in the most urgent stages and to withdraw as soon as normal conditions begin to be re-established, the ICRC is to hand over part of its aid activities to governmental and specialized agencies, so that from now on it can concentrate on the work of protection and on tracing missing persons. The dismantling of the supply and distribution system will be carried out in parallel with the phasing out of relief operations staff.

Nevertheless, in May there was much relief activity: the chartered vessel, the *Kalliopi*, made its last trips between Limassol and Beirut, bringing the remaining relief supplies that had been held in storage in Cyprus (with the exception of 350 tons kept as an emergency reserve). The ICRC ship transported a total of 1,700 tons of relief supplies during May, most of them being provided by the European Economic Community (EEC) and valued at 7 million Swiss francs. Thus the grand total of goods dispatched to Lebanon by the ICRC between October 1975 and May 1977 is 15,518 tons, representing 58.5 million Swiss francs.

The figures break down as follows: 13,479 tons of foodstuffs, 1,200 tons of blankets and clothing, 664 tons of medicines and medical equipment and 175 tons of miscellaneous goods (kitchen utensils, in particular). Among the donors, apart from Governments and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, were many inter-governmental and international organizations such as the European Economic Community (EEC), UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), and others.

In the south of Lebanon, the direct distribution of relief supplies by the ICRC has continued intensively, to bring emergency food and medical supplies to the civilian population. In May, more than 200 tons of relief supplies were sent to this region. The convoys also made it possible for the ICRC to bring out ten people requiring urgent medical treatment.

The ICRC intends to keep up this operation in the south of the country for as long as the disturbed situation gives rise to needs that cannot be met by any other body.

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On 17 May a meeting was held, in the ICRC headquarters in Geneva, of some National Red Cross Societies geographically close to Switzerland and which had taken part in the ICRC's action in Lebanon. The ICRC wished to present an account of its activities in the country, after making an analysis of the various stages of the operations.

Israel and the occupied territories

In May three transfer operations were carried out under the auspices of the ICRC, across the United Nations buffer zone in Sinai, and on the occupied Golan Heights.

On 11 May, 95 persons going to visit their families and ten students enrolled in the University of Cairo crossed at El Khirba the buffer zone towards the Egyptian capital; in the opposite direction, 157 visitors and ten students who had graduated travelled to the occupied territories of Gaza and Sinai.

On 4 May, two young women from the occupied Golan Heights went to join their husbands who were studying in Damascus. On 26 May, four civilian detainees, released by the Israeli authorities, reached the Syrian Arab Republic.

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In Gaza on 22 May there was a public meeting held by the local members of the legal profession to discuss the ICRC and its activities. The 300 persons or so, who gathered to listen to the ICRC delegates, included almost all the judges and lawyers of the vicinity, the chairman and members of the local Red Crescent, teachers, university staff and students, and a great many ladies.

Egypt

Mr. J.-P. Hocké, director of the Operations Division of the ICRC in Geneva, went to the Arab Republic of Egypt from 6 to 13 May. He visited the ICRC delegation in Cairo, and had talks with the Egyptian authorities and the leaders of the Egyptian Red Crescent on the work being done by the ICRC in the Middle East.

Arab Republic of Yemen

An ICRC delegate who had been in the Arab Republic of Yemen since 28 April has completed his mission. He visited ten places of detention, in Sana'a and other towns and saw more than 1,350 detainees, twenty of them being held for political reasons or offences. Relief supplies of various kinds (medicines, clothing, blankets, sleeping mats, water tanks, etc.) were distributed in the prisons visited. The value of these supplies amounted to 35,000 Swiss francs.
