

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Africa****Southern Africa**

During the first two months of the year ICRC activities in Southern Africa have developed substantially.

In December 1977, the ICRC appealed for funds to cover its relief programmes for the first four months of the year and its operating expenses until the end of June 1978. Initially for 3.1 million Swiss francs, the amount appealed for was increased by 1 million francs to meet the cost of several medical projects in Mozambique and of operations by two medical teams in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

With a view to informing likely donors about these developments, the ICRC organized two briefings in February in Geneva. These meetings were attended by the representatives of a score of governments and National Societies which displayed a special interest in these programmes.

At the end of February contributions promised in response to the ICRC appeal amounted to 708,500 Swiss francs. The ICRC hopes to obtain soon the necessary financial support for its continued work in this part of the world.

In *Rhodesia/Zimbabwe*, action has been extended. Several extra delegates have been despatched to increase the ICRC staff strength to twelve: nine in Salisbury (including a three-man medical team), two delegates at Bulawayo and one at Umtali. In addition, two mobile medical teams provided by the Nordic Red Cross Societies are ready to leave for Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Their mission will be to reinforce the personnel who visit the "protected villages", mission dispensaries, and

first-aid posts manned by Red Cross volunteers in Central Mashonaland, Eastern Mashonaland and Manicaland.

To *Mozambique*, the ICRC has forwarded relief supplies for the Ministry of Health. On 8 February two heavy-duty ambulances provided by the Swedish Red Cross were unloaded in the port of Beira. On 20 February an aircraft chartered by the ICRC landed in the same town with 11 tons of relief supplies valued at 127,000 Swiss francs and including two heavy-duty ambulances, 300 fully-equipped hospital beds, 850 sheets, 620 blankets and 4 marquees each for 50 people. This consignment was donated by the National Society of the Federal Republic of Germany and by the ICRC. All these relief supplies are for hospitals tending victims of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict.

These donations, decided upon after a survey by the ICRC in December, were delivered to the Mozambique Ministry of Health by Mr. Thierry Germond, ICRC delegate.

Botswana

The ICRC regional delegate based at Lusaka, Mr. Frédéric Steineman, went to Botswana in February for discussions with the National Society and the authorities. The latter authorized the ICRC to visit the country's prisons in order to report on detention conditions of a number of aliens detained for security reasons and whose countries have no diplomatic relations with Botswana.

The delegate also again visited the Francistown and Selebi Pikwe refugee camps in order to assess needs. Thanks to donations from the Swedish, British and Federal German Red Cross Societies, two consignments of tents and medical material are en route.

Zambia

The regional delegate next went to Zambia. On 25 February he was received by Mr. Joshua N'Komo, President of the ANC/ZAPU and co-leader of the Patriotic Front, who authorized him to visit the Zimbabwe refugee camps under ZAPU control. After Mr. Steineman's visits to four of these camps, the ICRC despatched by air 500 tents donated by the Swedish Red Cross.

East Africa

Tanzania

The ICRC delegate general for Africa, Mr. F. Schmidt, and regional delegate, Mr. F. Steineman, were in Dar-es-Salaam from 4 to 14 January. They conferred with representatives of the Government and with the General Secretary of the Tanzanian Red Cross, Mrs. M. Mackeja, on subjects of common interest, with a view to closer co-operation between the National Society and the ICRC.

Ogaden Conflict

Developments in Ogaden led the ICRC, at the beginning of 1978, to renew its overtures with a view to providing protection and assistance to the civilian and military victims of the conflict. At the same time, large relief consignments were despatched to Addis Ababa and to Mogadishu.

On 22 and 25 February two chartered aircraft conveyed to Ethiopia some 60 tons of relief supplies to a value of 445,000 Swiss francs, a donation from the ICRC. At the same time, standard parcels of emergency medical supplies to a value of 400,000 Swiss francs were sent to Mogadishu from where they were forwarded to hospitals near the front.

The ICRC is also endeavouring to strengthen its staff in the field (at the end of February it had one delegate in Ethiopia and two in Somalia) with a view to the quick and effective development of its operations, especially the distribution of relief to the civilian population affected by the events. The ICRC hopes soon to extend its protection by further visits to prisoners held by both sides.

During the seven months of its humanitarian activities in the Ogaden conflict, the ICRC despatched the following relief supplies:

To Ethiopia: 18.7 tons of medicaments, 81.2 tons of food, 1.6 tons of miscellaneous supplies (soap, etc.), 160 tents and over 10,000 blankets.

To Somalia: 46.7 tons of medicaments, 300.5 tons of food, 60 tents, over 20,000 blankets, sundry supplies (soap, mats, etc.) and one trailer-lorry (for carrying ICRC relief goods).

At 28 February, the ICRC had received from 11 governments, 15 National Red Cross Societies and various private bodies and individuals, in response to its appeal of 9 September, cash contributions amounting to 3.2 million Swiss francs and donations in kind to a value of over 500,000 Swiss francs.

The funds made available to the ICRC have almost run out. Needs are still great on both sides of the front and the ICRC is preparing plans to provide more assistance over the coming months.

Latin America

Delegate General's Mission

On 5 February 1978, Mr. Serge Nessi, ICRC delegate general for Latin America, left Geneva for a mission in the Caribbean and Central America.

He first went to *Cuba* at the invitation of the authorities and National Society. With leaders of Red Cross and with government representatives, including the Minister of Health and the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nessi discussed humanitarian problems.

After a short stop at *Panama*, on 12 and 13 February, for talks with the National Society, the delegate general proceeded to *Nicaragua*. On 15 February he was received by the President of the Republic, General Anastasio Somoza. He also met the Minister of the Interior and the Heads of Security and Police. President Somoza agreed in principle to further ICRC visits to places of detention and the Minister of the Interior orally confirmed acceptance of the arrangements proposed for these visits. Written confirmation must still, however, be conveyed to the ICRC.

Next the delegate general went to *Costa Rica*. At the invitation of the Red Cross he took part in the Seventh Meeting of Presidents and the Technical Seminars for the Societies of Central America, Mexico, Panama and USA from 14 to 18 February. Mr. Nessi gave a talk on ICRC protection and assistance operations.

On 17 February he was received by the new President of the Republic of *Costa Rica*, Mr. Rodrigo Carazo — who will assume office in May this year—with whom he discussed the role and action of the ICRC in the region.

Argentina

In January and February ICRC delegates continued their protection and assistance in places of detention in Argentina. They visited the prisons of La Plata, Sierra Chica and Rawson, where they saw a total of about 1,600 detainees.

ICRC assistance to detainees' families continued. In January 203 families received 4,500 dollars' worth of relief supplies, and in February 239 families 6,000 dollars' worth.

Chile

The ICRC delegation in Chile also continued its protection and assistance for detainees. In January delegates visited the *Carcel Pública* in Santiago where they saw 47 detainees. In February they went to the Santiago *Penitenciaría* where they saw 86 detainees.

The ICRC supplied medical and other supplies in prisons to a value of 1,500 dollars in January and about 800 dollars in February.

Assistance to detainees' families amounted to 11,600 dollars in January and 7,500 dollars in February. About 1,000 families received the benefit of these distributions in Santiago and in the provinces.

Asia

Thailand

In January and February the ICRC delegates in Thailand visited 78 police stations and four transit camps throughout the country. They saw 2,111 persons detained for illegal entry into Thailand.

Relief to a value of 18,000 Swiss francs was distributed during these visits.

Indonesia

An ICRC tandem of delegates, one a doctor, the other an interpreter, has been in Indonesia since 24 January to visit places of detention. The previous such mission of the ICRC in Indonesia was in February last year.

By the end of February this year, the delegates has visited eleven places of detention in Jakarta and in West Java.

Middle East

Delegate General's Mission

Mr. Jean Hoeffliger, ICRC delegate general for the Middle East, was in Lebanon and Israel from 9 to 22 February.

In Beirut he chaired a meeting of heads of delegations in the Middle East. The meeting examined ICRC activities in the region, and ways

and means for action to disseminate knowledge of humanitarian law. For that reason, the meeting was attended by Mr. Hans-Peter Gasser, head of the ICRC Legal Division.

In Israel, where he stayed from 17 to 22 February, the delegate general had working sessions with the ICRC delegation to draw initial conclusions from the first six weeks' practical experience of the new procedure for visits to security detainees. On 22 February, Mr. Hoeffiger met General Avraham Orly, the co-ordinator for occupied territories, to inform him of the ICRC's comments on the new procedure.

Lebanon

In January and February the ICRC delegation in Lebanon continued its general assistance to victims of the events. The fighting which had occurred in Beirut towards the middle of February demanded intervention by the ICRC delegation to help the National Red Cross Society to remove the wounded and civilians from the combat zones.

Mission by the Head of the Medical Division

From 12 to 23 February Dr. Rémi Russbach, Head of the ICRC Medical Division, was in Lebanon to assess the ICRC's medical work and to adapt it to the current situation in the country.

In South Lebanon Dr. Russbach visited the hospitals of Tyre and Nabatiyet. The situation is still tense, requiring an emergency plan which may be put into operation at the least alert. A system has been devised which includes the storage in Beirut and Tyre of standard parcels of emergency medical material ready for immediate despatch to the dispensaries and hospitals in the area of fighting.

Dr. Russbach also went to Tripoli in the north, where he visited the artificial limb centre opened by the ICRC with funds provided by the Netherlands Government. The prosthetist working in this centre has been seconded for a year by the Swiss Red Cross.

Dr. Russbach met Dr. Assad Rysz, Minister of Social Affairs, the leaders of the Lebanese Red Cross and representatives of the World Health Organization and of UNICEF.

A full report on the medical situation in South Lebanon, with special reference to the hospitals and dispensaries not yet under government supervision, will be submitted to the authorities who, on the basis of the report's practical proposals, will work out an action programme for the region.

Israel and the Occupied Territories

In two operations under ICRC auspices in February 686 people crossed the UN buffer zone in the north of Sinai. From the occupied territories of Gaza and Sinai 377 people went to Cairo and in the opposite direction, 309—including 51 students—crossed towards the occupied territories.

In the second of these operations, six Egyptian sailors were repatriated; their vessel had gone aground off Haifa in January this year.

Jordan

In February two Argentinian and two German tourists who had strayed from Israel to Jordan, while sailing in the Gulf of Aqaba, were escorted by the ICRC Amman delegate to his colleagues in the occupied territories.

On 9 February two Arab detainees released by Israel were able to return to Jordan under ICRC auspices.
