

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Angola

The regional delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for Southern Africa was in Angola from 9 to 26 October 1974. He was received by Vice-Admiral Antonio Rosa Coutinho, president of the Angolan Military Junta, and General Altino de Magalhães, chief military commander. He also met the president and members of the Red Cross in Angola.

The ICRC representative visited and was able to talk privately with eighteen prisoners of war of the Front for the National Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and thirteen of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), who were held in a military camp at Salazar and also in the Luanda central prison, military camp and army hospital. Following the visits, the prisoners were released under agreements concluded between the Portuguese Government and the MPLA, on the one hand, and the FNLA, on the other.

The delegate also visited fifty-four civilian detainees in São Nicolau camp (Bentiaba) and talked with them without witnesses. After the visit, the camp was closed down by order of the Ministry of Justice, and the detainees were transferred to Luanda. The delegate further visited four political detainees in the prison of Pereira d'Eça (Cunene district) and spoke with them without witnesses. He also inquired about the material conditions under which Ovambo refugees were living in the Pereira d'Eça area, a matter which he discussed with Vice-Admiral Rosa Coutinho and General Altino de Magalhães.

Lastly, at Belize in the Cabinda district, the last four Portuguese prisoners of war held by the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola were released under the auspices of the ICRC, on 5 November.

The ICRC regional delegate for West Africa, who had visited the prisoners on 14 May last, was present at their release.

Rhodesia

From 19 to 26 November 1974, the ICRC regional delegate for Southern Africa and a medical delegate visited the Khami and Salisbury prisons, which hold a total of some 3,300 prisoners of different categories. As usual, they were able to talk with inmates of their choice.

Following the visits, the ICRC delegates conveyed their findings and suggestions to the director of the Prison Department. The ICRC report will be sent to the Minister of Justice from Geneva.

Zaire

On 17 November 1974, the ICRC regional delegate for West and Central Africa visited four Portuguese prisoners of war held by the FNLA at Kinkuzu (Zaire).

The delegate was able to talk privately with the prisoners of war.

Mauritania

From 18 to 25 November 1974, an ICRC regional delegate for West and Central Africa made a stay in Mauritania. On 22 and 23 November he visited the Ksar prison, at Nouakchott, and there saw about thirty persons detained for reasons or offences of a political nature. The delegate was able to talk with detainees of his choice without witnesses. At the close of the visit, with the aid of the Mauritanian Red Crescent, relief supplies were distributed to the prisoners.

The delegate's suggestions and recommendations were transmitted to the Minister of the Interior, and the report of the ICRC will, as usual, be sent to the detaining authorities.

Congo

On 29 November 1974, the ICRC regional delegate for West and Central Africa visited seventeen Portuguese soldiers interned at Pointe Noire.

As usual, the ICRC delegate spoke with the prisoners without any witnesses and provided them with toilet items and cigarettes.

Ethiopia

Between 11 and 13 December, the delegate-general for Africa of the ICRC, accompanied by the two regional delegates for East Africa and a medical delegate, visited some 200 persons arrested in Ethiopia since 27 April 1974 for political motives or crimes.

They met the deposed Emperor in the house where he is at present detained, in the grounds of the Menelik Second Palace, and other detainees within the compound of the 4th Division, in the Menelik Second Palace and two police stations. They also visited 21 members of the ex-Emperor's family who are kept under protective custody in the Duke of Harrar's villa and in the house of the commander of the bodyguard. Throughout their visits the ICRC delegates were able to speak in private with all detainees of their choice. Following their visits, the delegates presented their conclusions and recommendations to the competent authorities of the Dergue. Among other points, it was agreed that such visits would be repeated in the future, if necessary.

Latin America

ICRC President's Mission to Latin America

From 13 to 16 November 1974, Professor Eric Martin, President of the ICRC, accompanied by the delegate-general for Latin America, made a stay in Brazil. He was welcomed by Mr. T.W. Sloper, the new president of the Brazilian Red Cross, and visited the Society's Curitiba and São Paulo chapters.

On 17 November, the President of the ICRC left on an official visit to Paraguay. Accompanied by the ICRC delegate-general for Latin America and the regional delegate for South America, he took part in the Tenth Inter-American Red Cross Conference, at Asunción from 19 to 23 November. While in Paraguay, Professor Martin was received by General Alfred Stroessner, Head of State. He also conferred with the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Education, the Interior and Health.

On 22 November, the ICRC President arrived in Peru, where he met several leaders of the National Red Cross Society.

Bolivia

An ICRC delegate was in Bolivia from 12 November to 3 December 1974 and there met leaders of the Red Cross Society and government authorities.

On this mission, the ICRC delegate visited six places of detention, between 19 and 23 November, at La Paz, Chonchocorro, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. Altogether he saw 91 political detainees. Medicines from the ICRC stocks and various relief items purchased locally, valued

at around 4,000 Swiss francs, were distributed to the detainees during those visits. In addition, the delegate bought food supplies, on the basis of an ICRC credit of 18,000 Swiss francs, for a programme of material assistance to detainees' families. Distributions will be carried out by the Bolivian Red Cross.

Chile

Pursuing their activities, ICRC delegates in Chile visited eleven places of detention between 19 and 28 November, and saw some 500 detainees. This brings the number of prisons and persons visited during the month of November 1974 up to twenty-nine and 1,700 respectively.

The ICRC has extended its assistance programme to detainees and their families. In November, various relief supplies valued at 60,000 Swiss francs were distributed to 2,900 needy families and also in the places of detention visited.

Ecuador

From 15 to 20 October, the regional delegate stayed in Ecuador, where he had talks with Ecuadorian Red Cross leaders. He also met the Vice-Minister of the Interior and the Director of Prisons.

He visited three places of detention at Quito, where he saw altogether 702 detainees and distributed relief supplies in the form of medicines, blankets and mattresses.

Paraguay

The ICRC regional delegate of South America was in Paraguay from 19 to 30 September. He was received by officers of the Paraguayan Red Cross and conferred with the Minister of the Interior and the Director-General of Prisons.

The regional delegate visited two places of detention at Asunción holding a total of 1,500 detainees.

During a further stay in Paraguay, on 18 and 19 November, he went to five places of detention and handed the detainees individual parcels (see *International Review*, December 1974).

Asia

Burma

From 9 to 12 November 1974, the ICRC regional delegate for South-East Asia was in Burma, where he met Burma Red Cross leaders.

On that occasion, the regional delegate was informed of the use made of the 10 tons of powdered milk donated by the ICRC last March. It was distributed in schools in the central area.

Middle East

Family reuniting and student travel. — From 14 October to 5 November, eight family reuniting and student travel operations were carried out under the auspices of the ICRC, enabling 938 persons to return to occupied territory and 3,617, including students and visitors, to go to the Nile Valley.

On 12 November 1974, eighty-five persons proceeded from the Arab Republic of Egypt to occupied territory, while 254 (including thirty-three students) crossed over into the Nile Valley. In a second operation, carried out on 28 November, 195 persons went into occupied territory, and 336 (including eleven students) returned to Cairo.

Lastly, on 11 December, a third operation enabled ninety-six persons to go from the Nile Valley to Gaza and Sinai. Conversely, 265 (170 of whom were pilgrims) crossed over into the Nile Valley.

Visits to prisons. — During the second half of 1974, the ICRC delegates carried out a twenty-ninth round of visits to prisons in Israel and the occupied territories. In thirteen places of detention, they saw some 2,600 civilian detainees from various Arab countries or occupied territories.

It will be recalled that the ICRC is allowed, usually a month after their arrest, to see so-called “security” prisoners (sentenced, awaiting trial or in administrative detention) and penal law prisoners (sentenced or awaiting trial). ICRC delegates do not visit Arab detainees of Israeli nationality because they do not come into the category of persons protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

During the visits, the delegates spoke with prisoners without witnesses. Monthly distributions of parcels containing additional food and toilet items are made to detainees who have had no family visit for over three months. Lastly, the ICRC arranges for free bus transport once a month in order that detainees’ needy families may be able to visit places of detention.

Relief. — On 10 December 1974, the ICRC sent food supplies to the St. Catherine Monastery, in the southern part of the Sinai.

Europe

Cyprus

The ICRC is continuing its Cyprus activities of protection for and assistance to victims of the conflict on either side. About thirty persons, including delegates, Central Tracing Agency experts and a medical co-ordinator, are at work there, plus thirteen members of six medical teams supplied by the Red Cross Societies of Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden, and the ICRC.

Civilians. — The ICRC is concerned about the welfare of civilian minorities in Cyprus, whether Turkish communities isolated in the south or Greek communities in the northern area now controlled by the Turkish armed forces.

The ICRC delegates and the mobile medical teams make regular visits to the villages in which those people live, render them material aid and provide medical care. Emergency cases that require hospitalization are transferred from one zone to another, in co-operation with UNFICYP (United Nations Forces in Cyprus).

In the area under Turkish military control, by the end of November the ICRC had completed the transfer to the southern area of Greek Cypriots (most of them very old and sick) who had remained at Voni (around 400 persons) and Gypsos (1,200 persons).

Prisoners of war. — On 28 November 1974, the ICRC handed over to the Turkish authorities in Nicosia nine Turkish soldiers who had lost their way in the southern area and been captured on that same day by forces of the Greek Cypriot National Guard.

A few days earlier, three Turkish Cypriot prisoners of war were released and transferred to the northern area, under the auspices of the ICRC.

Central Tracing Agency (CTA). — With the resumption of school programmes, the offices of the Central Tracing Agency, which in July had been installed in Lycapithos school, Nicosia, were transferred to another Greek district of the town. Seven experts from Geneva are at present working there with seventy-four local employees. In addition, twenty-two persons are at work in the five sub-agencies located in the Turkish part of Nicosia, and at Limassol, Larnaca, Paphos and Ormidhia, in the south.

The main activities of the various Agency bureaux still consist in tracing the missing, registering requests for transfer from one area to another, and, lastly, the transmission of family messages. Around half a million have been exchanged since the beginning of the conflict, and mail now reaches a daily figure of almost 6,000 units.

Relief. — From the beginning of the operation up to the end of November 1974, the ICRC distributed the following supplies: 19.1 tons of medicines, 48.3 tons of powdered milk, 22 tons of baby foods, 160 tons of protein-enriched food, 25.6 tons of clothing, 132,000 blankets, 9,671 tents, 13,200 camp-beds, more than 2,000 jerricans and more than 800 bedding items.

Financial situation. — On 6 December 1974, contributions made to the ICRC action in Cyprus, in kind and in cash, were as follows: 10,322,090 Swiss francs in kind (including the cost of the medical teams of five National Societies) and 7,511,739 Swiss francs in cash, namely a total of more than 17.8 million Swiss francs. Government contributions in response to ICRC appeals reached 12.6 million Swiss francs (6.3 million in kind and 6.3 million in cash) from the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

On 13 December, the ICRC received a further donation of 30 million yen (approximately 374,000 Swiss francs) from the Japanese Government.

The ICRC received donations amounting to 3.3 million Swiss francs (including 3 million in kind) from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the following countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, USSR and Yugoslavia.

Lastly, more than 1.6 million Swiss francs, mainly in cash, were provided by other donors, including the League of Red Cross Societies, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNHCR, EEC, the Council of Europe and Caritas.