

The ICRC will send a report on the Conference to governments and to the United Nations. The majority of the experts expressed a wish that a further conference on weapons be held next year.

ICRC Action in Cyprus

In its issues of August, September and October 1974, the International Review published some information regarding the ICRC's humanitarian tasks accomplished in Cyprus. The various aspects of this action and its development are described in the following article.

The International Committee of the Red Cross has developed since 22 July 1974 its humanitarian activities on behalf of victims of the conflict, particularly in three spheres: assistance to civilian victims of the events; protection for civilian and military prisoners, whether wounded or able-bodied; tracing the missing, and transmitting news between families who have been separated.

To carry out these tasks, devolving upon it by virtue of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, an extensive system was instituted.

In Cyprus, forty-eight delegates, including eleven members of six medical teams supplied by the Finnish and Danish Red Cross Societies, and that of the Federal Republic of Germany, were assigned to the Greek area and to territory controlled by the Turkish armed forces; three delegates were sent to Turkey to concern themselves more particularly with prisoners.

On its arrival in Cyprus and Turkey, the ICRC received the full support and effective co-operation of the respective authorities.

The ICRC took part in talks between President Glafkos Clerides and Vice-President Rauf Denktash, representing the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus, held in Ledra Palace Hotel, Nicosia, in the presence of representatives of the United Nations. The

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ICRC put forward practical proposals regarding the release and repatriation of prisoners. It also made proposals regarding assistance to Greek civilians who had remained in the northern area.

The active part played by the ICRC in negotiations on matters purely of a humanitarian nature allowed rapid headway to be made in the talks and even led to an agreement between the two Parties.

As from July, there was excellent co-operation between the ICRC and the United Nations, in the field and in Geneva, in rendering assistance to civilians who had been cut off, in the transport of the sick and the wounded, and in the transmission of family messages.

That co-operation was increased when, with the resumption of hostilities, arrangements had to be made to cope with the problem of more than 200,000 displaced persons, including the majority of the Greek Cypriots who had fled south, the remainder being Turkish Cypriots who had left their villages.

In co-operation with an ad hoc governmental committee and with the aid of the Cyprus Red Cross in the days immediately following the fighting, the ICRC launched an emergency operation for the refugees until such time as other bodies might take over.

Working meetings were subsequently held in Cyprus by representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and ICRC delegates. Regular contacts allowed a survey and the planning of early or long-term aid to displaced persons.

The ICRC, which was able to act in the emergency owing to the fact that it was present at the time of the events, is now contemplating a gradual reduction of those activities and focussing its efforts on Greek and Turkish communities who are cut off.

To obtain the material and financial resources required for its operations, towards the end of August the ICRC made a further appeal for funds to Governments and National Societies.

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Civilian population

The aid rendered as from 22 July to civilian victims of the conflict, whether Greek Cypriots who remained in the northern area or who fled to the south, or Turkish Cypriots isolated in their

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Relief supplies arriving in Cyprus.



The Tracing Agency office in Nicosia.

Photos Vaterlaus / ICRC

villages, was considerably extended owing to the new situation created by the resumption of hostilities.

Displaced persons

The main effort concentrated on displaced persons who, fleeing before the advance of the Turkish army, surged southward in their thousands. An immediate census taken of those refugees showed that about 200,000 Greek Cypriots left the area now under the control of the Turkish armed forces. The ICRC co-operated very closely in the emergency relief action organized by the ad hoc governmental committee, in co-operation with the Cyprus Red Cross and Civil Defence. The aid rendered by the ICRC was essentially in the form of tents, camp-beds and blankets, food and medicines.

It would appear that by the end of September about half the displaced persons had found provisional shelter with relatives or friends, or else in houses under construction or in tents. As the emergency phase has now ended and the ad hoc governmental committee supported by the United Nations is meeting needs out of the island's resources and relief supplies imported, the ICRC is considering gradually ending its relief action for this category. It will nevertheless continue, through government channels, to send donations announced or en route, and certain quantities of food having a high protein content.

Turkish minority

Since the beginning of the conflict, the ICRC has made regular visits to Turkish communities in the districts of Limassol and Paphos, in the southern part of Cyprus, which are cut off from the outside. ICRC assistance has been mainly in the form of medical care and additional food supplies. In this respect, there has been close co-operation with the United Nations, whose patrols have carried out the distributions in the more inaccessible villages.

The ICRC has also sent relief supplies to Turkish Cypriot refugees in the Episkopi and Parameli camps, in the territory of the British base at Akrotiri.

Area under Turkish army control

The ICRC was faced with an emergency situation in Greek villages abandoned by all save some small groups, most of them aged, who were in great distress. They were gradually taken to camps, particularly at Voni, Vithsada, Gypsos and Morphou. Immediate arrangements were made for medical emergency action and food distribution. The ICRC also prepared a plan for provisioning some 400 civilians interned in the Dome Hotel, Kyrenia, and the Greek population of Karpas Peninsula (about 9,000), and it reminded the Turkish authorities of their responsibility under Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

Medical situation

Six medical teams, provided for the ICRC by the Danish and Finnish Red Cross Societies, and by that of the Federal Republic of Germany, composed of a doctor and a nurse each, have been at work in Cyprus since 24 August 1974.

The teams were first assigned to the Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos districts. Three of them were later sent north, where medical needs were more pressing. While in the south, their work consisted in a thorough survey of the health conditions prevailing in the Turkish communities isolated since the events and totally lacking any medical service. In close co-operation with the United Nations doctors, the teams treated a number of special cases, evacuated the sick and the wounded, attended to about a hundred persons a day, and distributed medicines.

When transferred to the area under the control of the Turkish armed forces, the medical teams applied themselves to ensuring the survival of the Greek Cypriot population (about two thousand, including many old people), who, for days and even weeks, had been left without care or any means of subsistence.

In view of the gravity of the situation, a small hospital was opened at Gypsos, and some eighty out-patients were treated daily, with the help of locally recruited auxiliary medical personnel.

The three doctor-delegates sent out from Switzerland have continued their rounds of the island's hospitals to ensure that the medical situation there is under control. They have also concerned them-

selves with the living conditions of displaced persons in the south.

However greatly population movements have hampered any survey in depth, the doctor-delegates have nevertheless noted that the situation has on the whole become more normal, thanks to the work being done by a number of Greek Cypriot medical teams.

Prisoners

As from July 1974, ICRC delegates in Cyprus and Turkey have made regular visits to soldiers and civilians who have been granted prisoner-of-war status by the authorities on either side. On the eve of resumed hostilities, they were distributed as follows : 3,268 Turkish Cypriots interned in eight camps in Cyprus ; 63 Greek Cypriots in Saray prison, in the Turkish part of Nicosia, and 385 Greek Cypriots in a camp in Turkey.

Under the tripartite declaration of 30 July, several repatriation operations involving small groups of prisoners were carried out under the auspices of the ICRC.

As fighting in August resulted in further captures, the ICRC requested permission to visit existing and new prisoners on either side. Visits were made to several thousand Turkish Cypriot prisoners in four camps in the south. Greek Cypriot prisoners were first visited in transit camps in Cyprus, and then in three camps in Turkey.

End of prisoner release and repatriation operations in Cyprus

On 28 October 1974, the last prisoner-of-war release and repatriation operation took place in Cyprus, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, enabling 261 Turkish Cypriots and 279 Greek Cypriots to join their families.

With this operation, a total of 5,980 persons including 9 Greek citizens and 18 Turkish citizens have been repatriated by the ICRC, by virtue of the mandate entrusted to it under the agreements of 13 and 20 September 1974, signed by President Glafkos Clerides and Vice-President Rauf Denktash.

In the initial phase 1,222 Turkish Cypriots and 884 Greek Cypriots were repatriated in five operations carried out between 16 September and 3 October. Those repatriated were priority cases such as wounded and sick.

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A further agreement, signed on 20 September, provided for the release of all prisoners. Repatriation could not start immediately, however, owing to technical difficulties connected with the organizing of convoys to bring Greek Cypriot prisoners back from Turkey to Cyprus. Arrangements having been finalized, release operations were resumed on 18 October with a first batch of prisoners on either side. Operations continued until 28 October. The nine operations allowed 2,111 Turkish Cypriots and 1,745 Greek Cypriots to return home.

All repatriation operations took place in the presence of the relevant authorities and with the technical assistance of the United Nations Force in Cyprus.

Tracing operations

When hostilities again broke out on 14 August, the ICRC opened two new tracing bureaux—at Limassol and Larnaca—in addition to those already operating in the Greek and Turkish sectors in Nicosia. Bureaux were also set up in the south-east, which has the largest concentration of displaced persons.

Seven ICRC delegates who are Tracing Agency experts are at work there, with about 120 local employees and volunteers to help them.

By 21 October, 140,000 messages had been exchanged between separated families (including prisoners); 35,000 requests to trace missing persons had been registered, 15,000 of which received a positive reply.

Relief

From the beginning of hostilities until 22 October, the ICRC sent out more than 36 tons of medicaments and medical supplies, more than 1,250 tons of equipment (tents, blankets, and so forth), and around 320 tons of food amounting in all to 14,8 million Swiss francs.

Donations

On 22 October 1974, the donations received were 16,509,200 Swiss francs, in kind and in cash, from the following Governments: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Federal Republic of Ger-

many, Greece, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

Donations from Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies amounted to 3,270,000 Swiss francs, in kind and in cash, from the following countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, German Democratic Republic, Greece, Hungary, India, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mauritania, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, USSR and Yugoslavia.

Donations in kind and in cash amounting to approximately 1,397,450 Swiss francs were also received by the ICRC from the League of Red Cross Societies, Magen David Adom, "Palestinian Red Crescent", UNICEF, UNRWA, the European Economic Community (EEC), the Council of Europe, the Pontifical Mission and the Greek Cypriot Community in Beirut, and, lastly, Nestlé Liban.¹

¹ The figures for donations in kind are approximate.