

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Latin America****Chile**

*ICRC activities.* — In March 1975, the delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited seven places of detention and two hospitals in Chile, where 778 detainees were held by order of the military authorities. From 1 to 17 April 1975, they visited thirteen places of detention holding 983 detainees. Medicaments were distributed on several occasions. During March 1975, medicaments, toilet articles, foodstuffs and clothing, to a value of 30,000 dollars were distributed to 2,700 families of detainees (800 of them in Santiago).

*Delegate-general's mission.* — The ICRC delegate-general for Latin America was in Chile from 16 to 27 March, after a stay in Argentina, where he met Red Cross leaders and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Santiago, he had talks with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice, the Interior and Defence. On 21 March, he was received by the President of the Republic, General Augusto Pinochet. The activities of the ICRC since September 1973 were reviewed and humanitarian problems still to be solved were examined.

As a result of those conversations, the facilities which had been granted in the past to the ICRC for the discharge of its humanitarian mission were renewed and further facilities were granted, in particular with regard to visits to places of detention.

## Central America

The regional delegate of the ICRC for Central America and the Caribbean was in *Panama* from 12 to 31 March. He met Red Cross leaders and visited the local Red Cross branches at David and Colon.

He then went on 31 March to *Nicaragua*, where he met the Minister of the Interior and leading members of the Red Cross.

In *Guatemala*, on 4 April, he was welcomed by the President and Director of the National Red Cross Society and was received by the Ministers of the Interior, Defence and Education. Between 14 and 18 April, he visited four places of detention holding 1,190 detainees, eight of whom were imprisoned for political reasons.

## Europe

### Northern Ireland

The ICRC delegate-general for Europe and North America, accompanied by a medical delegate, made a seventh round of visits, from 6 to 21 March last, to administrative detainees in various prisons in Northern Ireland. In the Maze prison and Armagh women's prison they saw altogether 536 detainees.

### Cyprus

Over the past few weeks the ICRC has continued to provide protection and assistance for Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot minorities.

Five medical teams have given the population care and organized the transfer of medical cases. From 24 March to 4 April, they transferred eighteen persons from north to south, and six in the opposite direction. In addition, 460 medical consultations were given in Turkish Cypriot villages and districts in the Greek area.

By the middle of March, the ICRC had distributed or handed over to the authorities some 760 tons of food and medical supplies, apart from tens of thousands of items of clothing, blankets, tents, etc.

The Tracing Agency, the only link between separated families, transmitted more than 1,100,000 family messages from the start of its operation until the beginning of April.

On 4 April, the government sub-committee met again under the auspices of the United Nations. The meeting, which was attended by ICRC representatives, decided to revive the ad hoc committee for tracing missing persons. In the meantime, that committee has been considering

an ICRC proposal that a tracing service comprising representatives of both communities should be set up.

## Middle East

*Family reuniting.* — Two family reuniting operations, under ICRC auspices, took place on 19 March and 10 April 1975, between Gaza-Sinai occupied territory and the Arab Republic of Egypt. They were carried out in the United Nations buffer zone on the El Qantara road. In two operations, 376 persons returned to Gaza-Sinai occupied territory and 641 to the Nile Valley.

*Repatriation of mortal remains.* — An operation for the repatriation of the mortal remains of thirty-nine Israeli soldiers who fell in Egyptian territory during the October 1973 war was carried out under the auspices of the ICRC on 4 April 1975. This, too, took place in the United Nations buffer zone, on the El Qantara road.

*El Arish floods.* — During March, the ICRC delegates continued their assistance to the victims of the floods which struck the El Arish area on 22 February 1975. They endeavoured to draw up a list of the names of the missing after a tour of northern and central Sinai.

In addition, from 23 February to 6 March, the ICRC co-operated with the Israeli authorities in distributing 3,000 blankets, 500 bags of food, 550 bags of flour, 228 tents, 374 parcels of clothing, and some 9 tons of fruit and vegetables to 423 families.

Relief supplies offered by the Arab Republic of Egypt will shortly be transferred and distributed under ICRC auspices.

## Iraq

The ICRC has had to end its relief action on behalf of victims of the conflict in Iraqi Kurdistan. Following the agreement reached between Iran and Iraq, the Iranian Government informed the ICRC that it did not object to a continuance of ICRC relief operations for Iraqi Kurdistan provided the Iraqi Government approved. However, the Iraqi Government asked the ICRC to cease its humanitarian assistance owing to the new situation created by the agreement.

At the request of the Iraqi Government, the ICRC has also ceased supervision of the repatriation of Kurdish refugees from Iran, a role entrusted to it by the Iraqi Government at the end of February.

The ICRC has reminded all parties concerned that it remains ready as ever to help all victims.

## Asia

*We would draw our readers' attention to the fact that the news related here goes only to the end of April, when the Review went to press.*

### South Vietnam

Due to the rapidly changing situation in South Vietnam and the considerable number of displaced persons urgently requiring humanitarian aid, the Red Cross has found it necessary to step up considerably its assistance programmes for civilians.

On 3 April 1975, the International Red Cross appealed to National Societies and Governments for 30 million dollars, in addition to the 5 million dollars for which a similar appeal had been sent out on 25 March 1975.

By 21 April, in response to the appeals, contributions in cash and in kind amounting to 37 million Swiss francs had been promised or sent by the National Societies and Governments of the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, France, German Democratic Republic, India, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States of America.

*Relief.* — Following the report of the survey team sent to Saigon to make an assessment of needs in co-operation with the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam, a three-month plan was drawn up with the aim of assisting 500,000 persons scattered mainly in the provinces around Saigon and on Phu Quoc Island. From the beginning of March to mid-April, the Red Cross of the Republic of Vietnam, with International Red Cross help, distributed large quantities of food (rice, condensed milk, salted fish and tinned meat and fish), kitchen utensils, mosquito-nets and mats to some 75,000 families (about 380,000 persons).

The Red Cross Society of the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG) requested assistance amounting to 6 million Swiss francs. An initial contribution of one million Swiss francs in cash was approved on 2 April. The International Red Cross is also endeavouring to satisfy in the shortest possible time that Society's request for food aid and has already committed over five million francs for this operation.

By 20 April, the quantity of goods (foodstuffs, medical supplies, tents and blankets) which had already reached or were on the way to Indo-China amounted to over 5,100 tons, including some consignments shipped direct by a number of National Societies.

The European Economic Community (EEC) has promised a gift of 1,000 tons of rice and one hundred tons of powdered milk.

A large proportion of the goods are temporarily stored in Singapore, Bangkok and Vientiane before being forwarded to the places where displaced persons are concentrated.

In order to meet swiftly the most urgent requests, the International Red Cross sent a number of consignments by air to Indo-China. The first aircraft, loaded with food, tents and blankets, a gift from the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, arrived at Saigon from Cologne on 1 April.

A second aircraft, chartered in the German Democratic Republic, arrived at Hanoi on 16 April with twelve tons of food supplied by the International Red Cross and with medicaments from the GDR. These relief supplies were forwarded to the Republic of South Vietnam (PRG).

On 23 April, an ICRC DC-6 arrived in Hanoi with five tons of relief supplies (medicaments and tents) donated by the Red Cross Societies of Austria, Finland and Switzerland. On the same day, an aircraft of the German Democratic Republic, chartered by the International Red Cross, flew to Hanoi with a consignment of meat, tinned fish and condensed milk, a second flight being planned for 27 April; these two aircraft will have carried between them twenty-three tons of foodstuffs.

Two delegates of the International Red Cross, one of them head of the ICRC Relief Division, arrived in Hanoi on 19 April to draw up a precise and detailed list of the needs of the people being assisted by the Red Cross of the PRG. They examined also with the authorities in Hanoi the most practical means for the delivery of relief.

## **Cambodia**

On 16 April 1975, in view of the rapidly changing situation in Phnom Penh, the ICRC set up at the Royal Phnom Hotel a hospital and safety zone, directed by its delegates. The ICRC immediately informed both parties of the creation of this zone, earnestly requesting them to respect it, as it did not contain any military objectives or personnel. Several hundred civilians sought, in the ICRC zone, refuge from the effects of gunfire.

The International Red Cross was able to remain in radio contact several times a day with its delegation at Phnom Penh. The radio link was broken on 17 April, but two days later reliable sources gave reassuring news of the delegates, who were entrusted with maintaining contact with the representatives of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia.



Distribution by the local Red Cross of relief goods, supplied by the International Red Cross, to 30,000 refugees at the Vung-Tau camp (**April 1975**).

Photo Max Vaterlaus



At Vung-Tau, refugees filling in family message forms at the Red Cross Tracing Agency.

Photos Max Vaterlaus

Local Red Cross distributing food and water to refugees at Ham-Tan (**April 1975**).

