

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Europe

Miss L. Simonius, ICRC delegate, visited Athens from 24 to 29 November and Nicosia from 6 to 13 December.

While in Greece she met leading officials of the Hellenic Red Cross. Among matters discussed was the use to be made of a sum of money bequeathed by an expatriate Greek citizen to his native land through the ICRC.

In Cyprus, Miss Simonius had talks with Mrs Soulioti, President of the Red Cross Society, on the problem of persons reported missing and on the organization of a tracing service in collaboration with the Central Tracing Agency.

The ICRC delegate also had an interview with Dr. Hakki, Turkish Cypriot Vice-President of the National Society.

Asia

Thailand

On 24 November, the ICRC President welcomed a Thailand Government delegation visiting Geneva, and was informed that the Thai Government gave permission for the ICRC to visit the persons arrested after the *coup d'état* of last October and not yet released.

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The ICRC delegation in Thailand continued its visits to refugees in detention. Between 15 and 23 November, delegates visited seven places of detention where 23 of these detainees were held.

People's Democratic Republic of Korea

In mid-November, Mr. Djun Tehang Dioun, head of the delegation of the Red Cross of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to the Board of Governors, paid a courtesy visit to the ICRC. He informed the Committee that the delegate general for Asia was authorized to proceed to Pyongyang at a date which would be fixed later by common consent.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Through our delegation in Hanoi, the Vietnamese authorities have asked for the service of the ICRC to organize the repatriation of Taiwanese nationals still living in Ho-Chi-Minh Ville. Negotiations are still in progress with the authorities of Taiwan to obtain entry visas and to settle the financial and practical aspects of this transfer, should it take place.

Philippines

As part of the programme of aid to displaced persons in Mindanao, the ICRC has sent to the Philippine Red Cross ten tons of milk powder and a hundred tons of flour, gifts from the Swiss Confederation. The flour will be made into bread and biscuits in Manila before being sent to the southern provinces.

In addition to these donations in kind, the ICRC handed over a cheque for 6,000 dollars to the Philippine Red Cross for the distressed people in Mindanao.

Pakistan

Mr. D. Borel, ICRC regional delegate, visited Pakistan from 3 to 14 December in order to take part in the distribution by the National Red Crescent Society of relief supplies of food for Biharis in refugee camps.

India

Returning to India on 15 December, Mr. Borel had talks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the problems resulting from the war with Pakistan, especially the plight of the Biharis who left Bangladesh to go to Pakistan and who are still being held in detention in India.

Nepal

During a visit to Nepal from 22 to 31 December, the regional delegate had discussions with the authorities, who showed keen interest in humanitarian law, the Diplomatic Conference and the dissemination of knowledge of Red Cross principles.

Middle East

Lebanon

Financing. — An information meeting on Lebanon took place on 17 December 1976 at the ICRC headquarters, attended by about fifty representatives of the permanent missions to the UN, among them several ambassadors. The President of the ICRC Executive Board, Mr. Roger Gallopin, accompanied by the ICRC directors, described the Committee's present activities in Lebanon—modified since the cessation of hostilities, but requiring to be continued for an indefinite period.

The four-month plan, initiated by the ICRC last October and first estimated at 46 million francs, has now been reduced to 44 million after adjusting the on-the-spot assessment of needs. The sum of 13 million Swiss francs still has to be found if the budget is to be covered completely. Consequently, while he thanked the permanent representatives for all that their countries were already giving, Mr. Gallopin asked for new approaches to be made to governments so that funds would be forthcoming without delay to support the ICRC's action in Lebanon.

Delegate general on mission. — The ICRC delegate general for the Middle East, Mr. Michael Convers, started a two-week mission to Lebanon and Syria on 7 December, in order to assess protection and relief problems following the cease-fire.

Prisoners. — Although, as reported in the last issue of *International Review*, the ICRC arranged the simultaneous exchange of prisoners in the hands of the various parties, there are still a few persons held prisoner. On 15 December the delegation visited 12 prisoners in the hands of the Lebanese armed forces. At the end of December the delegation had not yet visited prisoners of the Syrian armed forces, but it was said that about two hundred of them had been set free.

Medical aid. — As already stated, the ICRC hospital in Beirut was closed on 10 December, but the installations remain in place.

From now on, the main lines of ICRC medical action in Lebanon will be as follows: in southern Lebanon, where the situation is not yet completely calm, it is necessary to keep a stock of emergency supplies sufficient for two weeks' requirements in case fighting breaks out again; in the rest of the country, it is planned gradually to reduce our medical aid programme in Beirut in order to concentrate for a little longer on supplying the most distressed rural areas.

Moreover, our efforts will be largely directed towards supporting the medical activities of the Lebanese Red Cross and the "Palestinian Red Crescent".

It has been decided to organize as quickly as possible a number of projects for rehabilitating disabled persons in such a way that the projects can be taken over by National Societies, government agencies or other interested bodies.

Relief. — The ship *Kalliopi*, on charter to the ICRC, was slightly damaged early in December in Tyre harbour. When the repairs were completed on 20 December the vessel resumed her relief voyages between Cyprus and Lebanon.

Israel and the occupied territories

United Nations General Assembly

The Special Policy Commission of the United Nations adopted, on 2 December, a resolution condemning the measures taken by Israel to change the demographic composition of the occupied Arab territories, and restating that the Fourth Geneva Convention still applied to all territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

On 11 November, the Security Council had adopted a declaration along the same lines.

Action to aid the handicapped in Gaza

The German Red Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany has again given money (30,000 marks) to the ICRC to be used for disabled persons in Gaza.

The action, which the ICRC is conducting in collaboration with the Magen David Adom, was begun in 1972. It provides for disabled

persons from the Gaza Strip to receive a prosthesis free of charge and to have appropriate rehabilitation treatment.

Egyptian food donation for Sinai

On 15 December a transfer operation took place under the auspices of the ICRC across the United Nations buffer zone in Sinai. About 88 tons of foodstuffs, the gift of the Arab Republic of Egypt, were taken from the Nile Valley to the occupied territory of Sinai. The food was given for distribution among needy people in the territory, especially the sick.

South Sinai

An ICRC delegate, Mr. M. Zufferey, went to southern Sinai from 28 November to 3 December, to observe how the Bedouin tribes in that region were faring.

Africa

South Africa

Psychiatric hospitals. — During an exploratory mission to assess the conditions and the treatment of patients, the ICRC delegates visited a score of private and state psychiatric institutions. The mission ended on 9 December with talks between the ICRC delegate general for Africa, Mr. F. Schmidt, Dr. Wildbolz, medical delegate, and the South African Health Secretary.

Namibia/South-West Africa

From 16 to 23 December, two ICRC delegates, Mr. D. Dufour and Mr. P. Zuger, carried out a mission in Namibia/South-West Africa to study the living conditions of the Angolan refugees there. Most of these refugees were living in two camps, but some were to be found living in villages with the local population.

At the Society's request, the ICRC gave the South African Red Cross the sum of fifty thousand Swiss francs, for the purchase on the local market of relief supplies for the refugees.

At the same time the ICRC began negotiations with the Government of the People's Republic of Angola to work out a scheme to enable these refugees, if they so wished, to return to their own country.

Rhodesia

Mr. F. Schmidt, ICRC delegate general for Africa, met the Justice Minister in Salisbury on 7 December, to try to obtain permission for ICRC delegates to visit categories of prisoners whom they have not so far seen: guerrilla fighters arrested while carrying arms and already sentenced, prisoners under interrogation and those undergoing trial. The authorities have promised to consider the ICRC's request.

Mr. A. Beaud, ICRC delegate, started visits to the "protected villages" in order to find out what the inhabitants needed and estimate the amount of relief that should be sent. He also contacted the appropriate authorities and the two branches of the African National Council, to work out methods of distributing the relief supplies.

Somalia

In Mogadishu, Mr. J.-F. Borel, ICRC delegate, together with the Somali Red Crescent and the authorities, worked out a procedure for using relief supplies originally intended for refugees who have since gone back home to Djibouti, the situation there having returned to normal. The supplies will now be distributed from seventeen "youth centres" throughout the country.

The goods comprise 10 tons of milk powder and 50 tons of flour donated by the Swiss Confederation, 5,000 francs worth of drugs and 23,000 francs worth of vitamins.

Mauritius

Mr. U. Bédert, ICRC delegate for East Africa, was in Mauritius from 25 November to mid-December. He visited local sections of the Red Cross and gave several lectures on the International Red Cross and the ICRC.
