

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Financial appeal

On 30 June the ICRC appealed to several governments, National Red Cross Societies and a number of other donors—including the European Economic Community—to finance its humanitarian activities in Africa during the second half of 1980. At present the ICRC is engaged in a dozen African countries, and its outlays for the second half of this year are estimated at 23.4 million Swiss francs.

Delegate-general's mission

From 3 to 26 June the ICRC delegate-general for Africa, Mr. Frank Schmidt, went on a mission to Chad, Zaire and Angola.

In *Chad* he had talks with the leaders of the various factions currently fighting each other in N'Djamena. He asked them to guarantee the safety of ICRC delegates, this being a sine qua non of continued ICRC action for combat victims in the capital. No guarantee was received.

In *Zaire* the delegate-general contacted a number of government officials. With the State Commissioner for Foreign Affairs he discussed, inter alia, the protective work of the ICRC in the country's places of detention.

From 15 June Mr. Schmidt was in *Angola* for a series of talks with the authorities on the assistance operation undertaken by the ICRC jointly with the local Red Cross in favour of 50,000 displaced persons in the south of the country. Mr. Schmidt went to Huambo, where ICRC delegates taking part in the assistance programme are based, and he attended a relief distribution at Katchiungo (formerly Bela Vista). The delegate-general also visited the ICRC orthopedic centre at Bomba Alta.

Southern Africa

The activities of the ICRC delegations in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana are gradually ceasing. In these three countries the National Red Cross Societies and local social organizations are taking over from the ICRC some on-going programmes.

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, in May and June, operations were handed over to the local Red Cross and various social organizations which undertook to carry on certain activities which proved still to be necessary (e.g. food relief programmes).

A page was thus turned for the ICRC, whose protection and assistance activities had involved intense effort over the last three years. The ICRC humanitarian mission had often been extremely difficult, and three of its collaborators lost their lives in the course of it. Now, with peace restored in Zimbabwe, an account can be drawn up, and the following summary gives an insight into the ICRC action in the country.

One essential ICRC task in the event of armed conflict is to protect the civilian and military victims. Paradoxically, the ICRC considers that in this priority sphere it did not fully achieve its objective, as distinct from food and medical assistance, the second of its main activities.

Since 1959, regularly twice a year, the ICRC has been visiting persons arrested and convicted for political reasons or offences. It may be said that several of the country's current leaders were visited by ICRC delegates while they were in prison. During the war years, however, the ICRC's mandate was limited to visiting administrative detainees. For instance, the ICRC never had access to detainees convicted under martial law or to combatants captured while bearing arms.

On the other hand, from 1977 onwards, the ICRC developed for the benefit of detainees' families an assistance programme which amounted to 60,000 Swiss francs annually, and it organized bus transport to enable families to visit their detained relatives. About 3,500 persons visited the prisons each year under this arrangement, costing some 25,000 Swiss francs per annum.

Other protection tasks are the Agency activities, that is to say, the seeking of missing persons, the forwarding of family messages and the reuniting of families separated by events, made necessary by the lack of communications when frontiers are closed in the event of war. These soon became major activities at the ICRC Salisbury delegation. A card index of prisoners and missing persons contains more than 10,000

names; 722 tracing files were opened, for about half of which it has so far been possible to give positive replies. The Agency activities will be continued by the ICRC for several months before being handed over to the Zimbabwe Red Cross.

Food and medical assistance were also on a considerable scale from 1977 onwards, as a result of civilian population shifts caused by the fighting, and because the ICRC remained the only international organization operating in the whole country during the conflict.

More than 100,000 people living in rural areas received food each month for nearly three years, costing between 200,000 and 370,000 Swiss francs and consisting mainly of maize, milk powder, beans, salt and protein-rich food. Other relief comprised clothing, tents, blankets, soap, etc. Special programmes were developed in favour of several tens of thousands of vulnerable people (very young children, nursing mothers, schoolchildren, and so forth) and persons suffering from malnutrition.

During the final phase of the conflict the number of people fleeing the combat areas to seek refuge in the towns, especially in Salisbury, increased considerably, making an assistance and housing programme necessary. Since 1978 the ICRC has provided at Seke, near the capital, wooden and dried-brick huts for more than 4,500 displaced persons.

Since independence the people at Seke have been gradually returning to their villages. At the end of April 1980 the Seke camp was handed over by the ICRC to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and to the Chitungwiza Urban Council.

The ICRC's medical action consisted in provisioning hospitals and tending to the population of areas without local medical services. Two ICRC mobile medical teams gave care and medicaments to a value of some 50,000 Swiss francs each month in more than 75 clinics and mission hospitals throughout the country. In addition, vaccination and medical education programmes organized by ICRC doctors and nurses reached more than 630,000 people.

At the beginning of 1980 the Patriotic Front asked the ICRC to provide medical assistance at the assembly points during the operations for the return of refugees from neighbouring countries. This task was carried out until April.

Finally, a word must be said about the information campaign to make the Red Cross, its emblem, role, activities and principles better known. Launched by the ICRC after the death of three of its collaborators at Nyamaropa near Umtali, the campaign was intended to reach as many people as possible by appropriate media: promotional

material was specially designed and ranged from strip cartoons to articles of everyday use, with an easily understood message about the Red Cross and about the ICRC in particular; lectures and seminars were organized by delegates throughout the country.

To carry out all these tasks the ICRC had a substantial delegation in Zimbabwe: 25 delegates and 180 local employees worked at Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali, Gwelo, Fort Victoria and Chiredzi, with transport consisting of three aircraft and 25 road vehicles (including three 7-ton trucks).

Angola

A large scale food and medical assistance programme began in May for the benefit of 50,000 displaced persons in Huambo province in the south of Angola. In co-operation with the "Angolan Red Cross", the ICRC distributed maize, and at Katchiungo five tons of other cereals were delivered at the beginning of June for 1,700 civilians suffering from malnutrition.

Large quantities of food—600 tons of maize, 80 tons of milk powder and 30 tons of butter oil—provided by the European Economic Community are being sent by sea to Angola. In the meantime about 100 tons of maize was flown in from Botswana to enable distributions to start.

The basic budget for the action amounts to 7.5 million Swiss francs. It is planned to extend the assistance to other areas. However, the ten ICRC delegates and those of the local Red Cross are encountering difficulties in carrying out their work, mainly because of the danger and the logistic problems. A relief distribution intended to be made at Katchiungo during the second fortnight of June, for instance, had to be postponed as too unsafe for the personnel.

The Bomba Alta orthopedic centre, financed and managed by the ICRC is continuing to operate. Thirteen local employees have begun their training in the manufacture of artificial limbs and in physiotherapy for amputees.

Namibia

On 3 June Mr. Roger Santschy, head of the ICRC delegation at Pretoria, accompanied by another delegate and a medical delegate, went to Mariental Prison where they visited, in accordance with the usual ICRC procedures, the 118 detainees of both sexes held there.

Zambia

In June ICRC delegates in Zambia distributed relief in camps for Namibian refugees. In all, 12 tons of milk powder, one ton of baby food, 5 tons of soap, 1½ tons of blankets, insecticide, etc. have been delivered to the camps either direct or through SWAPO and the Zambian Red Cross.

Malawi

The ICRC regional delegate for Africa, Mr. Urs Jenny, was on a mission from 10 to 17 June in Malawi to renew—after two years—contact with the authorities and the National Red Cross. With each of his interlocutors the ICRC delegate talked of problems inherent in the humanitarian mission of the ICRC, whether in relation to its tasks of protection and assistance or to the dissemination of international humanitarian law. While in Malawi, the regional delegate was able to give an account of ICRC activities for the benefit of the victims of the Rhodesian conflict in the last few years.

Zaire

After their visits to civilian and military places of detention, the ICRC delegates had access for the first time to a place of detention run by the State security police. The visit took place on 1 May, in Kinshasa, and enabled the delegates to see about a hundred detainees without witnesses. Comforts were provided for the inmates.

Chad

In Chad the work of the ICRC was gravely impeded in May and June by the intermittent fighting and increasing danger.

In spite of the delegation's overtures to the various contending factions, and notwithstanding the delegate-general's visit in June, the situation in the field has not improved and at the end of June the persistent combats compelled the ICRC to withdraw its delegates to Kousséri, on the Cameroon side of the Chari river. Since then the delegates go to N'Djamena when conditions permit in order to carry out their tasks: visiting prisoners, distributing relief and medicaments, tracing missing persons, and transmitting family messages.

The ICRC delegation in the zone held by the Armed Forces of the North (FAN) has on several occasions been a target for firing, and

this finally impelled it to withdraw to Kousseri on 24 May. Since then medical supplies have continued to be sent to the medical centre in the zone where some fifty Chadians are working. The activities of the Tracing Agency also continue.

The delegates in the zone held by the People's Armed Forces (FAP) have also had to withdraw to Kousseri, since the delegation was hit several times by shell shrapnel in June. However, these delegates return to N'Djamena each day to carry on their activities: supplying medicaments, distributing relief to the civilian population, conducting enquiries about missing persons, etc. In May 80 tons of wheat, most of it provided by the European Development Fund, was distributed in N'Djamena and a score of nearby villages.

Latin America

Delegate-general's mission

The ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, Mr. André Pasquier, carried out from 16 May to 9 June a mission which took him to the Bahamas, Colombia, Haiti and Cuba.

In the *Bahamas*, where he stayed from 16 to 18 May, Mr. Pasquier attended the Biennial Seminar of the National Red Cross. He gave two lectures, one on international humanitarian law and the other on the role of the ICRC in international and internal armed conflicts. This visit enabled the delegate-general to forge closer links with the Red Cross and Government of the Bahamas. Bahamas, incidentally, recently ratified the Protocols additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

In *Colombia*, accompanied by Mr. A. Kobel, regional delegate, Mr. Pasquier had several discussions with the authorities, in particular with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence. The talks mainly concerned ICRC protection activities in the country's civilian and military places of detention. The delegate-general also met the leaders of the National Society, with which close collaboration developed.

An agreement was signed on 19 May with the Colombian Government, for the establishment in Bogota of an ICRC regional delegation

for the Andean countries, Guyana and Surinam. The Colombian Red Cross made an office available to the regional delegate.

In *Haiti*, from 25 May to 3 June, Mr. Pasquier attended, as an observer, the first Meeting of Presidents and Delegates of the Caribbean National Societies organized by the Haitian Red Cross under the auspices of the League of Red Cross Societies. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways and means to implement the National Societies' five-year plan worked out during the Eleventh Inter-American Red Cross Conference (Rio de Janeiro, June 1979). Apart from the host Society, eight National Red Cross Societies took part in the meeting, which was attended also by observers from the Red Cross Societies of Colombia, the United States and Spain. Several resolutions were adopted, one of which is designed to promote the dissemination of international humanitarian law in the region.

The final stage of his mission took Mr. Pasquier to *Cuba*, where he was joined by the regional delegate for the Andean countries, Mr. Kobel. Several discussions took place with leaders of the National Society. In addition, Mr. Pasquier and Mr. Kobel met the Vice-Minister of Health and representatives of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with whom they reviewed ICRC activities in Latin America.

El Salvador

In June, to cope with the worsening situation in El Salvador, the ICRC reinforced its organization there. Five delegates, including a doctor and a Central Tracing Agency specialist, were despatched to the capital.

In close co-operation with the National Society, measures were taken also with a view to assistance action. The ICRC now has stocks of foodstuffs and medical supplies on the spot.

In addition an ICRC delegate and a member of the National Society made a survey in several provinces of the situation of persons displaced by events.

In the field of protection a delegate and a doctor visited several places of detention in the capital and the rest of the country, from 24 June to 10 July. In all, they saw about thirty persons detained in connection with the events.

Finally, following the May strike of civilian hospital staffs, the head of the ICRC delegation in El Salvador had several talks with the medical committee and with Ministry of Health representatives.

Nicaragua

In May and June the ICRC delegates in Nicaragua visited 17 places of detention and six hospitals throughout the country. In all, they saw some 3,900 prisoners of war and detainees held for security reasons.

We would point out that since the end of the civil war the ICRC has continued its regular visits to all places of detention in the country, in accordance with recognized procedure (interviews without witnesses, access to all penitentiary premises, freedom of movement inside the prisons, etc.).

Visits to places of detention

In May and June the ICRC delegates in Latin America carried out several series of visits to places of detention. These visits are undertaken by teams of delegates, usually accompanied by an ICRC doctor. Interviews without witnesses take place with detainees chosen by the delegates or having asked to speak with them.

In *Argentina* eight places of detention with 492 detainees were visited between 21 April and 10 May; in June the delegates went to the La Plata prison, where they saw 663 detainees.

In *Chile* a series of visits began on 25 June. By 3 July nine places of detention in which there were 122 detainees had been visited by the ICRC.

In *Paraguay* the ICRC regional delegate visited five places of detention in which he met seven persons detained for political reasons.

In *Uruguay* the visits begun at the end of January 1980 continued in May. From 22 April to 16 May a team of three delegates and a doctor went to ten places of detention in which there were 235 detainees held on security grounds. In addition, the authorities gave the ICRC their agreement to its visiting again the prison known as "EMR No. 1" or "La Libertad". That visit took place on 8 July. The delegates interviewed without witnesses 40 detainees of their choice and saw the entire prison premises. In all, the series of visits in Uruguay included 17 places of detention and the ICRC delegates interviewed 1,428 detainees without witnesses.

Asia

Assistance to Kampuchean people

A meeting on humanitarian assistance and relief to the people of Kampuchea, convened by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, took place in Geneva on 26 and 27 May, and was attended by representatives of 62 countries. The ICRC and UNICEF, invited as observers, made a joint statement in which they explained their policy for action in aid of the Cambodian people both within the People's Republic of Kampuchea and in the region across the Thai border. The joint statement was as follows:

“Since the autumn of 1979, the ICRC and UNICEF, in co-operation with FAO and WFP, have conducted a major relief operation in favour of the Kampuchean people. Although much has been achieved, even more remains to be done if the situation is not to become very serious once again in the months ahead. But the ability of the partners in this operation to achieve their objectives depends, on the one hand, on the willingness of the international community to provide active support and adequate financial and material resources and, on the other, in no small measure, on the authorities of the countries involved to grant the guarantees necessary for this operation to truly and fully meet the needs of the affected populations.

ICRC/UNICEF policy throughout has been—and remains in the short and medium term—to ensure the procurement, delivery and distribution of the quantities of relief supplies, particularly food and medicine, necessary to help avert famine and alleviate the most pressing health problems within Kampuchea. This policy aims at encouraging Kampucheans to remain in or return to their homes rather than establish themselves on the Thai border. Closely allied to this is the imperative need for adequate quantities of rice seeds to be distributed in order to be planted in time. While the bulk of the aid is reaching Kampuchea through the country's ports, additional entry points in the East and in the West agreed by all parties concerned would greatly help distribution; arrangements are already being finalized to provide relief goods through Vietnamese ports to the eastern provinces.

The failure to pursue the above-mentioned policy and implement the necessary measures to improve delivery and distribution would lead to the danger of further massive influx of Khmers to the border area and/or into Thailand.

In respect of the joint programme's responsibilities in the border areas, it should be noted that while it is fundamental to humanitarian

law that medical aid be provided to wounded military and civilians alike, it is essential in this situation that civilians who constitute the only category entitled to food and other non-medical aid, particularly women and children, should be physically separated from combatants.

In summary, unless adequate relief is continued, sizeable elements of the Kampuchean population will soon face again a serious risk of starvation. For this, there are two essential prerequisites.

First, substantially more material assistance must be received from the international community, including increased means of transport to support a more adequate distribution system within Kampuchea in the near future.

Second, the joint UNICEF/ICRC programme must be assured that relief being provided will be equitably distributed among the whole civilian population in need.

Without such an assurance, it cannot be expected that sufficient resources will be entrusted to the responsible organizations, nor in the prevailing circumstances should the organizations themselves be expected to continue their humanitarian work. Therefore, they need the indispensable co-operation of all concerned to enable them to attain the goals outlined above."

In addition, the President of the ICRC addressed the meeting on 27 May. After referring to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law—particularly the 1949 Geneva Conventions—he thanked participants for the financial support pledged during the meeting to permit action to be continued. He concluded: "The ICRC is prepared to continue this action if the fundamental humanitarian principles are respected and the difficult problems can be overcome, which is not yet sure. That is why the ICRC hopes it may rely on the support of the international community and the co-operation of all parties concerned."

Kampuchea

The joint ICRC-UNICEF programme in Kampuchea, conducted with the help of the WFP, concentrated, in May and June, on the provision of rice seed before the rainy season. Daily flights took place between Bangkok and Phnom Penh, and during the same period 28,000 tons of seed was delivered by boat, mainly to Kampong Som, while another 22,000 tons was distributed at the Thai-Khmer frontier for the population of western Kampuchea.

Rice sowing seems to have proceeded satisfactorily. It may therefore be hoped that the end-of-the-year harvest will provide the Kampuchean population with part of its food needs, or at least ward off a famine which would have disastrous repercussions from a demographic point of view.

The distribution of food was not so good. For one thing, because of the danger, the ICRC and UNICEF delegates were not permitted to escort all convoys, as they would have wished. In addition, administrative and logistic difficulties impeded stock turnover and distribution, both at Phnom Penh and in the provinces.

The joint mission was deeply concerned by this situation. At the end of May the ICRC, UNICEF and the WFP approached the authorities of Kampuchea about these problems and, in a memorandum, asked for improvements without delay to permit the action to be conducted normally, so that relief would reach the people who needed it.

In the last few weeks the ICRC continued its programme for the re-equipment of the country's dispensaries and hospitals by providing equipment and emergency medical supplies (160 tons delivered in May alone). Moreover, a supplementary food assistance programme was started to provide milk and protein-rich biscuits to hospitals and orphanages for persons suffering from malnutrition. The four ICRC medical teams distribute the rations during their rounds, when they also instruct the nursing staff on the use of the medical supplies provided by the international community.

Thailand

In Thailand the situation along the frontier, unstable and tense in May, began to deteriorate on 22 June. Violent fighting caused thousands of Cambodians to flee the camps where they had sought refuge, and some inhabitants of the neighbouring Thai villages also fled in panic. The ICRC teams of delegates and medical personnel scoured the border region for several days when conditions permitted, in order to remove the wounded and seek the fleeing refugees, in order to regroup them and help them. Because of the continual fighting, distributions in the camps to Cambodians coming from Kampuchea for supplies at the frontier could no longer be made regularly.

In addition, the ICRC delegates continued their efforts to protect detained persons and certain vulnerable groups in the camps.

In view of the precarious situation, the ICRC President, on 25 June, sent a message to the Thai authorities expressing the ICRC's concern

about the protection of victims and asking that civilians be removed from the combat areas. The ICRC also informed the Phnom Penh and Hanoi governments of the action taken. Since that date the situation in the field has been very confused. Continued hostilities at the frontier makes the humanitarian organizations' work very difficult and dangerous.

People's Republic of China

At the invitation of the Chinese Red Cross, a joint mission of the League of Red Cross Societies and of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency was in the People's Republic of China from 15 to 24 June. The League was represented by Mr. Patrick Vice, regional delegate for Hong Kong and Macao, and the CTA by Mrs. Florence Vondra, head of the Asia Service. The mission, part of the joint action for refugees from Viet Nam, was intended to make an on-the-spot appraisal of the medical action undertaken by the Chinese National Society, and also to discuss problems relating to tracing activities.

In Peking, where she stayed from 15 to 19 June, Mrs. Vondra had talks with the National Society leaders, particularly Mrs. Yung Chun and Mrs. Wang Yi, Vice-Presidents. In Canton and in the province of Kwantung, Mrs. Vondra and Mr. Vice were received by Mr. W. Feng, Vice-President of the Red Cross provincial committee and General Director of the office for the reception and resettlement of refugees. Mrs. Vondra and Mr. Vice also met other interlocutors from the Red Cross and the authorities.

The League and ICRC delegates visited two State farms and a reception centre where there were refugees. They also went to the Red Cross hospital in Canton, for which the international Red Cross has supplied medical equipment under the regional action programme for refugees from Indochina. From the discussions guide-lines emerged for co-operation between the National Society's tracing service and the CTA in Geneva.

Afghanistan

On 16 June Mr. G. Fontana, ICRC delegate in Kabul, was called to Geneva for consultations on the continuation of ICRC action in Afghanistan.

An ICRC mission had been sent to Afghanistan last January. After its discussions with the highest authorities of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the ICRC was given assurances about the possibility

of carrying out its traditional protection and assistance activities for victims, and its enquiries about missing persons.

Since then the ICRC delegates in Kabul twice visited the Pouli Charkhi prison near the capital. At the same time, the ICRC distributed some 2½ tons of emergency medical supplies to various Kabul hospitals.

Recent developments in Afghanistan and certain difficulties encountered by the ICRC in the discharge of its mission made consultations with its delegate necessary. The ICRC has made further approaches to the authorities and proposed sending quickly a high-level mission to Kabul to discuss pending problems.

Malaysia

The ICRC regional delegate for South-East Asia, Mr. R. Duc, and a delegate from Geneva, visited, in two Malaysian prisons, from 23 to 28 June, more than 700 persons detained under the Internal Security Act.

Iran

On 6 May, at Zurich-Kloten airport, the mortal remains of American military personnel killed at Tabas (Iran) were handed over to the United States authorities by the ICRC and the Swiss Government.

On 14 June an ICRC delegate went to Sanandadj, capital of Kurdistan, to assess the situation. Accompanied by a representative of the Iranian National Society, the delegate gathered some information on the needs observed in the town, particularly medical. However, for security reasons, it was not possible to visit the Sanandadj area and the delegate returned to Teheran on 17 June.

Visits to places of detention continued in June. The ICRC delegates went to Tabriz, Kermanshah, Isfahan, Mashad and Shiraz. The series of visits is to continue in July.

Middle East

Israel and occupied territories

The ICRC, which has been present in Israel and the occupied territories since 1967, maintains fifteen delegates in its offices at Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Gaza in order to ensure, consistent with the 1949 Geneva

Conventions, protection and assistance for the civilian Arab population of the occupied territories (West Bank, Golan, Gaza Strip).

One of the ICRC's priority activities is to visit civilian Arab detainees. The ICRC delegates regularly visit the prisons. In May they went to six places of detention, and since December 1978 they have also had access to detainees undergoing interrogation, within 14 days of arrest. In May, for instance, they carried out 280 such visits. Assistance provided by the ICRC takes the form of standard parcels to detainees who receive none from their families, and bus transport to enable families to visit their detained relatives.

Events on the West Bank

After the events in the occupied West Bank of the Jordan in May, the ICRC informed the Israeli authorities of its anxiety about the humanitarian consequences to the civilian population. In addition to expulsions and the destruction of houses, curfew had been decreed in certain villages, making provisioning difficult. Moreover, the Israeli armed forces had taken very strict security measures.

The ICRC delegates, from 7 May onwards, went several times to places where the curfew had been imposed (Anabta, Hebron and the Deheishe Palestinian camp near Bethlehem). Tension was still very high and the ICRC efforts, consistent with the 1949 Geneva Conventions, were aimed to protect the civilian population and particularly to prevent collective punishment.

Transfers

In May and June six operations were organized under ICRC auspices for the transfer of persons between Israel or occupied territory and neighbouring Arab countries. During three of these operations, eight detainees released by the Israeli authorities returned to their respective countries (Lebanon and Arab Republic of Egypt). One operation enabled three members of a family to join their kin in occupied Golan, and one person from occupied territory crossed to Damascus to rejoin his family. The mayors of Ramallah and Nablus, wounded during an attack, were taken to Amman hospital for treatment.

Lebanon

Following the February fighting in the north of Lebanon, a government commission was set up for the reconstruction and revival of

public services. The ICRC takes part in the commission's work, particularly in the field of medical assistance. On 6 May an ICRC doctor and nurse accompanied the Ministry of Health team to Knat to give out-patient treatment.

In June fighting at Saida, in southern Lebanon, resulted in many wounded. The ICRC delegates and Lebanese Red Cross first-aiders removed a score of casualties to the town's hospitals. The cease-fire being most precarious, these operations were very dangerous: two of the National Society's first-aiders were injured when their ambulance was hit by gun-fire.
