

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INDO-PAKISTAN CONFLICT VICTIMS

In India and Pakistan

A further operation for the repatriation of wounded prisoners of war was conducted between India and Pakistan on 10 April 1972. The ICRC's DC-6 aircraft brought thirty-five Pakistani prisoners of war from New Delhi to Rawalpindi and, conversely, repatriated one Indian prisoner of war.

On that occasion, the ICRC aircraft carried 3,000 parcels prepared by the Pakistan Red Cross for Pakistani prisoners of war in India. Usually, parcels for Indian and Pakistani prisoners of war are sent direct to the Indo-Pakistani frontier station of Wagah.

The ICRC delegates in India and Pakistan are continuing their regular round of visits to prisoner-of-war camps. In Pakistan, the 635 Indian prisoners officially announced by the government are mainly in two camps, at Lyallpur and Rawalpindi,¹ which ICRC delegates have already been able to visit several times. In India, Pakistani prisoners of war, of whom there are more than 90,000 according to Indian sources, are interned in some forty camps installed in the basin of the Ganges. By the end of April, the ICRC delegates had visited more than 60,000 Pakistani prisoners in India, the families of Pakistani servicemen, other Pakistani civilians and the crews of a number of ships of the Pakistani merchant navy interned in India.

The ICRC forwards a great deal of correspondence between detainees and their relatives. Lastly, the Central Tracing Agency is continuing to carry out its specific tasks: the exchange of lists of prisoners of war and capture cards, the transmission of prisoners'

¹ *Plate.*

mail, the "treatment" of numerous requests for information or individual enquiries, and so forth. The receipt and forwarding of relief parcels (several thousand have already been distributed) to prisoners of war are part of the activities of ICRC delegates.

As regards the application of the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC is making a sustained effort to ensure that the parties concerned carry out a general repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian detainees. The repatriation of seriously wounded prisoners of war has made some headway, as all seriously wounded Indian prisoners held in Pakistan, and several dozen seriously wounded Pakistani prisoners held in India have been repatriated. Further operations are planned, so that all may return to their own country in the near future.

In Bangladesh

Hand-over of relief operations to Bangladesh Red Cross

In our recent issues we published articles describing the relief operations in Bangladesh for the benefit of the civilian population. Those operations were undertaken, following the hostilities in Bangladesh in December 1971, by the ICRC with the backing of the League and of several National Societies. The operations were planned for a period of three months. In order to put that plan into effect, two agreements were signed in January 1972, one with the Government of Bangladesh and the other with the newly formed National Society in order to associate the latter in the relief operations.

It was agreed that, at the end of the three months, arrangements would be examined for the hand-over of the operations to the Bangladesh Red Cross. On 8 March, the Government of Bangladesh asked the ICRC, in the interest of the people and to promote the development of the National Society, to hand over to the Bangladesh Red Cross, without the transfer in any way affecting the duties incumbent on the ICRC under the Geneva Conventions.

In the course of a transitional period, therefore, the ICRC gradually handed over the relief operations to the Bangladesh Red Cross and, by an agreement signed on 18 April, officially

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transferred responsibility. This agreement provides, *inter alia*, that the Bangladesh Red Cross will carry on the distribution to needy sections of the population, consistent with the principles of the Red Cross, of the relief supplies provided by the ICRC.

In accordance with the wish expressed by donors, therefore, the ICRC has ceded to the National Society food, blankets, clothing, tents, a large stock of medicaments, lorries, ambulances, other vehicles, prefabricated houses and various other equipment, to a value of 9 million taka, or about 4.8 million Swiss francs. In addition, the Bangladesh Red Cross may use, when available, two DC-6 aircraft provided by the Swiss Government. It can also have facilities on the ICRC radio network.

For the discharge of its treaty obligations, the ICRC may obtain food relief by mutual agreement with the Bangladesh Red Cross. It may also obtain such relief direct from other sources.

As already mentioned, the ICRC continues carrying out its traditional activities, including the securing of acceptable living conditions and safety for certain sections of the population. These multiple activities involve a constant and considerable task for the ICRC and its delegates in Bangladesh, of whom there were still some twenty at the end of April 1972.

PAKISTAN

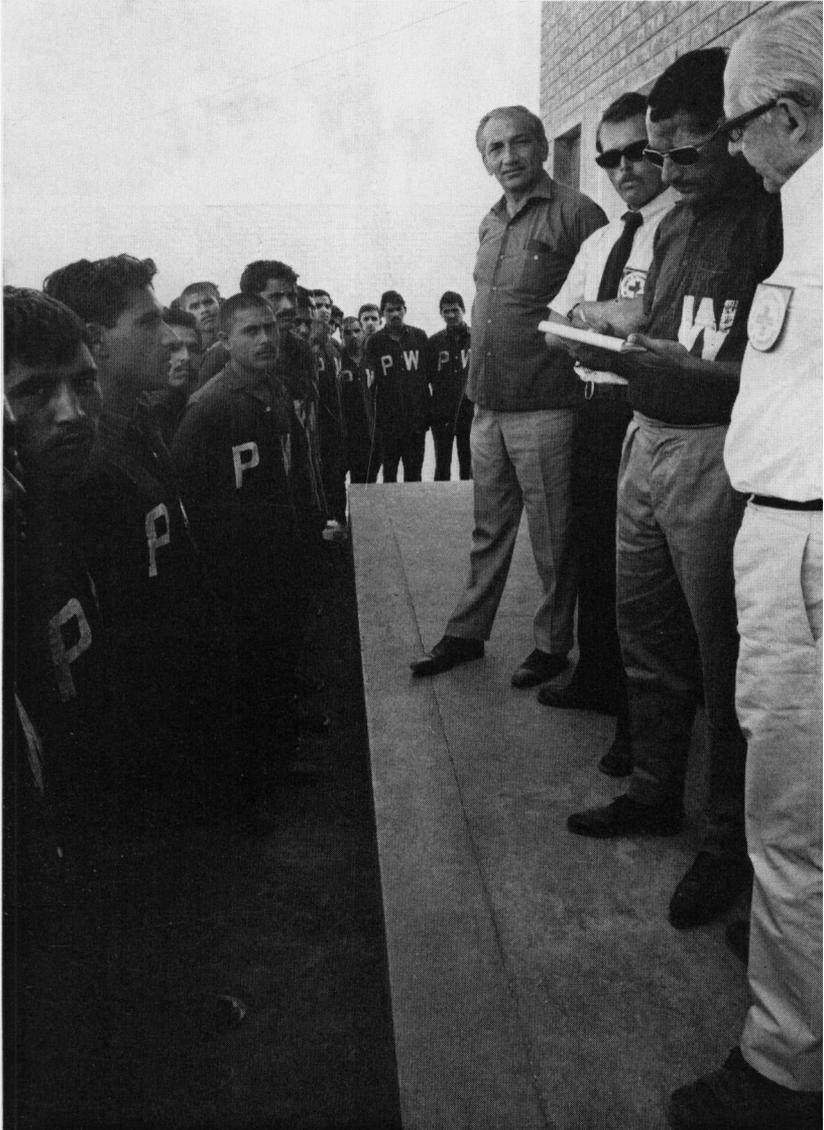


Photo J. J. Kurz/CICR

Two ICRC delegates talk with Indian prisoners of war in the Lyallpur camp, in the presence of their spokesman and of a representative of the Pakistan Red Cross.



An ICRC delegate talks with an Indian prisoner of war, in a military hospital at Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

Two ICRC delegates visit sick Indian prisoners of war in the Lyallpur camp.

Photos J. J. Kurz/CICR

