

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Mission to Asia**

From 4 March to 9 April 1972, Mr. Jean Ott, ICRC Delegate-General for Asia and Oceania, made a trip which took him to *Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Laos, the Republic of Vietnam, the Khmer Republic, Hong Kong and Japan*. In all the countries he visited, Mr. Ott was received by Red Cross leaders, and in six of them by government authorities.

In Djakarta, the ICRC Delegate-General was received by Mr. Adam Malik, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other members of the government. Among other matters, they discussed the second session of the Conference of Government Experts in which Indonesia is participating, the possible installation of an ICRC regional delegation in Djakarta, and the continuance of visits to persons detained for political reasons. The ICRC has already visited camps on the island of Buru.

Mr. Ott discussed with Singapore authorities the question of the ratification of the 1949 Geneva Conventions by that State. A decision is expected in the near future.

The ICRC Delegate-General then proceeded to Malaysia. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, talks were held regarding the country's participation in the Conference of Experts and the possibility of regular ICRC visits to detainees. A general authorization was granted to visit places of detention throughout Malaysia (including Sabah and Sarawak), and it was agreed that the ICRC mission was to take place early in April.

Mr. Ott presented the commander-in-chief of the Malaysian royal armed forces with the "Soldier's Manual", published by the ICRC, with a view to having it translated into Malay. The Ministry of Defence declared its readiness to co-operate with the ICRC in the matter.

In Vientiane, the ICRC Delegate-General was received by H.H. Prince Souvanna Phouma. He had talks in various ministries before proceeding to the Paksane area to visit refugee reception and resettlement centres.

On the next lap of his trip, Mr. Ott visited the Republic of Vietnam, where he conferred with Saigon authorities (Ministry of Defence), US advisers and the Red Cross about the condition of prisoners of war and ICRC activities with regard to them. Mr. Ott later visited the Pleiku camp.

In the Khmer Republic, the ICRC Delegate-General was received by Marshal Lon Nol, who confirmed his government's resolve to respect the Geneva Conventions. In this context, he will henceforth grant prisoner-of-war status to combatants captured by the Khmer armed forces and to Vietnamese sentenced to death and reprieved. Mr. Ott was also received by the Prime Minister, by the Ministers of Defence, the Interior, Justice and Health, and by the Director of Municipal Health in Phnom-Penh. He subsequently visited detainees in the Phnom-Penh prison.

From the Khmer Republic the Delegate-General went to Hong Kong, to look into the possibility of having relief supplies sent to South East Asia. Mr. Ott then left for Japan, where he called on Mr. Shigeo Tanabe, Executive Vice-President of the Japanese Red Cross, and Mrs. Sachiko Hashimoto, a recipient of one of the three Henry Dunant medals recently awarded by the Standing Commission of the Red Cross.

## **Khmer Republic**

During March, at the invitation of the Minister of State for Social Affairs, the ICRC delegate went to the province of Oddar Meanchey. At Samrong, he spoke to 67 persons, including a serviceman recently released from an enemy prison camp. They have now been housed at Samrong and provided with essential relief items. The ICRC delegate saw a wounded soldier in the hospital in that town. Lastly, he visited a refugee camp sheltering about thirty families. A few days later, he accompanied a member of the Khmer Red Cross to the province of Koh Kong, near the Thai border. There a relief distribution of mats, blankets and textiles was carried

out, and the delegate visited the provincial hospital of Koh Kong and the infirmary at Koh Kapik.

In February, the ICRC doctor-delegate in the Khmer Republic examined more than 5,600 persons in the course of his visits to Phnom-Penh refugee camps.

### **Republic of Vietnam**

From 1 to 3 March 1972, the ICRC delegates and doctor-delegates visited the Danang prisoner-of-war camp and the 95th Evacuation Hospital of the US armed forces.

### **Near East**

*Visits to prisoners of war* were made by ICRC delegates in Israel and in the Arab countries. As is customary, talks were held with the prisoners without any witness. The ICRC reports are sent to the detaining powers and to the prisoners' own governments.

*In Israel*, the 105 Arab prisoners of war (62 Egyptians, 42 Syrians and one Jordanian) were visited on 26 March and 10 April 1972, in the Sarafand military prison camp.

*In the Arab Republic of Egypt*, on 18 and 29 March 1972, ICRC delegates visited the ten Israeli prisoners of war interned in the Abassieh military prison. During the last visit, a religious service was held for the prisoners on the occasion of the Jewish Passover, and a small celebration was organized for them.

*In Syria*, the three Israeli prisoners of war were visited by the ICRC delegate on 23 March 1972.

*In Jordan*, the four Israelis whom the Amman authorities had granted prisoner-of-war status also had an ICRC visit on 23 March.

### **Israel and the occupied territories**

From 25 January to 29 February 1972, ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories made their twentieth round of visits to prisons. They visited thirteen places of detention and saw more than 3,000 Arab civilian detainees. As usual, they enquired into conditions of detention and talked to detainees without wit-

nesses, except for those whose questioning had not yet ended. The ICRC reports are sent to the detaining authorities.

### **Jordan**

On 29 February, the ICRC delegate in Jordan visited at the Mahatta prison in Amman, fourteen persons who had been evicted from the territory occupied by Israel.

### **Malawi**

On 11 April 1972, in Blantyre, a repatriation operation took place under ICRC auspices: three Portuguese nationals from Tete (Mozambique) whose aircraft made a forced landing in Zambia were released by the authorities in Lusaka and were able to return to Tete. At the same time, two Zambians, detained for having illegally entered Mozambique last year, were also repatriated.

### **El Salvador**

In continuation of his mission in Central America, the ICRC Regional Delegate went to El Salvador at the end of March. Being on the spot at the time of the attempted *coup d'état*, he applied for and obtained permission to visit persons arrested, over fifty of whom he saw during two visits to the national police headquarters. He took advantage of his stay in San Salvador to have discussions with the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning the forthcoming Conference of Government Experts; with the Vice-Minister of Defence and the Director of the military academy concerning the propagation of the Geneva Conventions; and with the Vice-Rector of the University with a view to the introduction of a course on international humanitarian law in the Law Faculty programme. He then went to Guatemala.

### **Venezuela**

In March the Regional Delegate for South America visited three further places of detention in Venezuela. He saw about fifty persons detained for political reasons.