

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

January-February 1985

Africa

Missions from Geneva

Dr. Athos Gallino, member of the ICRC, accompanied by Dr. Rémi Russbach, chief medical officer of the ICRC, went on mission from 20 January to 3 February, first to *Mozambique* and then to *Zimbabwe*, *Ethiopia* and *Sudan*. As head of the "Special Fund for the Disabled", created by the ICRC in 1983,¹ Dr. Gallino visited the centres for care of war amputees and paraplegics which have been set up in these countries by the ICRC with the support of local authorities and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The ICRC representatives went to Maputo (Mozambique), Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Debre Zeit and Asmara (Ethiopia) and Kassala (Sudan).

Dr. Gallino and Dr. Russbach also visited the ICRC feeding centres in Axum and Mekele (Ethiopia).

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Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, ICRC Director for Operational Activities, was in *Ethiopia* from 19 to 26 February and had discussions with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Social Affairs, the Chairman and the Secretary General of the Ethiopian Red Cross and a senior official of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, a

¹ See the *International Review of the Red Cross*, January-February 1984

government aid body. Mr. Hocké also went out into the field, to Tigre, Eritrea and Wollo, where the ICRC is conducting a large-scale relief operation for displaced people who are victims both of the disturbances and of the drought.

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Mr. Jean-David Chappuis, ICRC deputy delegate general for Africa, was in *Uganda* from 20 to 27 January. He was received in Kampala by the Vice-President of the Republic and Minister for Defence as well as by the Prime Minister; he had a general discussion with them on the ICRC's work in Uganda.

Angola

The ICRC continued its assistance programmes for displaced people in the provinces of Huambo, Bie and Benguela. However, at the authorities' request, it had to suspend its activities in Bie province for about ten days (26 January-6 February). Then on 11 February, armed men attacked and destroyed the feeding centre in Kuito at night. Other incidents occurred in Kuito itself, the capital of Bie province, and the ICRC was obliged temporarily to suspend its work in the townships of this province. However a delegate and a nurse from the ICRC continued to provide a reduced form of aid and assistance to the city of Kuito itself.

The ICRC supplied medicaments and medical items to the dispensaries and hospitals situated in those areas where it could supervise their use. In January and February ICRC medical teams gave 4,300 consultations in the townships they visited; teams from the "Angolan Red Cross" likewise gave an average of 14,000 consultations every month. In addition, 179 wounded and seriously ill were evacuated to hospitals in the provinces and 206 patients were taken home at the end of their treatment.

An average of 12,000 undernourished children were admitted to the 19 ICRC feeding centres each month; their close relatives who accompanied them to these centres were also supplied with food rations.

Furthermore, the orthopaedic centre in Bomba Alta, Huambo, manufactured appliances for 60 patients and repaired 465 prostheses and crutches.

As regards food aid, 1,197 tonnes of relief supplies were distributed in January to some 127,000 people in the provinces of Huam-

bo, Bie, Benguela and Huila, and 1,205 tonnes to 128,000 people in February.

Three Hercules cargo-planes brought relief supplies from ports along the Atlantic coast to storage depots that had been set up in the affected regions. From there, six light aircraft carried out 2,174 flights to transport the relief supplies to the central distribution points.

The local ICRC Tracing Agency office dealt with 53 requests for news and exchanged 21 family messages; in addition, it organized two family reunifications.

Republic of South Africa

The ICRC delegation in Pretoria continued its aid programme on behalf of detainees and their families in need. In January and February the amount of relief supplied (food parcels, travelling expenses for people to visit their relatives held in detention, various other forms of aid) came to 57,000 Swiss francs.

Namibia/South-West Africa

The ICRC established two aid programmes for the civilian population—programmes set up as a result of a survey conducted in October and November 1984 in the regions of Kavango, Kaokoland, Ovamboland, Damaraland and Namaland; three hospitals in Damaraland and Kavango received protein-enriched cereals for infants suffering from malnutrition and a primary school in Damaraland was given a month's supply of food for some 200 children. A primary school in Rehoboth was also provided with food aid.

On 1 February ICRC delegates visited two detainees in Windhoek prison. For January and February, aid for the detainees and their families in need came to some 17,000 Swiss francs.

Regional delegation in Zimbabwe

The ICRC regional delegate based in Harare went on missions to Botswana, Zambia, Lesotho and Malawi to visit the authorities and the National Red Cross Societies in these countries. His discussions with them centred mainly on the dissemination of knowledge of the basic rules of humanitarian law.

In addition, the delegate in charge of orthopaedic programmes at the ICRC headquarters in Geneva went to Zimbabwe on 18 January to follow up the establishment of the orthopaedic centre which the ICRC has decided to set up in Bulawayo, with the support of the Ministry of Health and the Zimbabwe Red Cross. The ICRC will provide finance, equipment, administration and staff training to run the centre, while the tasks of the Ministry of Health and the National Society will be more particularly to locate and receive the patients.

Mozambique

From 30 January to 5 February two ICRC delegates, including a doctor, conducted a survey in Zambezia province. As a result of this mission the ICRC decided to start an assistance programme for medicaments and medical items for hospital and health centres in districts within the conflict zone. It is also planned to carry out transport of sick people when the need arises.

In January and February, the orthopaedic centre in Maputo (where five ICRC technicians are working) manufactured 33 orthopaedic prostheses, 164 pairs of crutches and ten wheel-chairs; it fitted 28 invalids with appliances, thereby bringing to 561 the number of handicapped people fitted with prostheses since work began in April 1981.

Ethiopia

During the first two months of 1985, ICRC delegates distributed close to 11,200 tonnes of food to the Ethiopian civilian population suffering from the combined effects of the drought and the conflict situation. For the month of February alone 5,900 tonnes of food was supplied to some 409,000 people in the provinces of Tigre, Eritrea, Wollo, Gondar and Hararge; in January 5,276 tonnes were distributed to almost 370,000 beneficiaries.

In order to extend its work further and bring assistance to an even greater number of victims living on the uplands, the ICRC had to strengthen its logistic infrastructure and to increase airlifts of relief supplies to regions inaccessible by road. Consequently, in January three specially chartered planes flew in more than 1,000 tonnes of relief supplies to distribution centres in Axum, Adwa, Mekele, Maychew and Mehoni; in addition, some 2,055 tonnes were transported by aircraft placed at the disposal of the Ethiopian

authorities by the governments of the United States, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany. In February a cargo aircraft, chartered from the Belgian Government by the ICRC, began taking food supplies directly from the port of Assab to Mekele and Axum; from there the lighter ICRC planes transported the food to areas which have small landing strips.

Work in the feeding centres run by the ICRC continued without let-up. An average of between 150 to 300 undernourished children have been treated every month in each of these centres under the supervision of three ICRC doctors and ten nurses; in Mekele this figure exceeded 650 children. By the end of February five ICRC centres were in operation in the province of Tigre, at Mekele, Axum, Adwa, Maychew and Mehoni.

Moreover, medical missions were carried out in the provinces of Tigre and Eritrea (Barentu and Akordat) where the hospitals and health centres were stocked with medicaments and medical supplies.

In addition, 72 patients were fitted with appliances at the ICRC orthopaedic centres in Asmara and Harar.

Sudan

The ICRC delegation in Khartoum supplied some 1,600 tonnes of food and 7,000 blankets to people displaced from Tigre, and 205 tonnes of food to Ethiopian refugees living in the outskirts of Kassala and Gedaref.

The ICRC Tracing Agency office registered 190 tracing requests, concerning chiefly Ethiopian and Ugandan refugees, and transmitted 53 family messages.

On 29 January ICRC delegates visited the Sudanese ex-prisoners who had been repatriated from Chad and gave them relief supplies (food, soap, etc.).

Somalia

In January and February almost four tonnes of relief supplies (fruit, vegetables, sweets, cigarettes), worth 11,000 Swiss francs, were handed over to prisoners of war (212 Ethiopian and one Cuban) during the twice-monthly distributions.

Moreover, 147 family messages sent by Somali prisoners in Ethiopian captivity were forwarded to their relatives dwelling in Mogadishu and the surrounding area.

In co-operation with the Somali Red Crescent several conferences were organized in the four districts in the capital to disseminate knowledge of the principles of the Red Cross amongst various sectors of the public. An average of some 200 people attended each of these conferences.

Djibouti

From 19 January to 1 February, two ICRC delegates were in Djibouti and met representatives of the authorities and the "Red Crescent". They discussed various matters with them: dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law, accession to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions, and matters concerning the Tracing Agency and logistic problems connected with the ICRC's work in Ethiopia. The delegates also visited a camp where 8,000 victims of the drought are living, including some 1,500 people from Ethiopia.

Uganda

The ICRC continued its visits to places of detention in Kampala (prisons and police stations) where, in January and February, it saw respectively 1,385 and 102 detainees who came within its competence.

The local tracing office of the ICRC registered 28 tracing requests and forwarded 2,359 family messages between the detainees and their families. Moreover, in co-operation with the Ugandan authorities, the ICRC organized the transfer of 915 people from transit camps to other places.

Because of insecurity conditions, medical activities continued to be paralyzed in the field; however, medical teams went ahead with their campaign to vaccinate the displaced people gathered together in Kampala.

Through the governmental relief agency, the ICRC supplied assistance to the transit centres in Busunju, Kibizi and Nakazi and to the hospital in Mityana where the displaced people are housed. In all, 187 tonnes of food, 3,500 blankets and 22 tonnes of various kinds of relief supplies were distributed in January and February.

Zaire

The ICRC delegates in Kinshasa continued their visits to places of detention in the capital and in the provinces (Lubumbashi, Kalémié). In January and February, respectively, they saw 69 and 60 security detainees. Relief supplies were given to detainees and their families in need, i.e. 730 beneficiaries.

The local Tracing Agency office was mainly engaged in registering the detainees visited. It also handled 187 requests for news and exchanged 19 family messages.

In co-operation with the Red Cross of the Republic of Zaire, ICRC delegates gave several lectures on the Red Cross movement to some 1,800 people, mainly relief workers from the National Society.

Regional delegation in Togo

The ICRC regional delegate for West Africa, based in Lomé (Togo), attended an international conference on peace and human rights from 14 to 18 January, organized by the African Institute of International Private Law and the Togolese Government. Some 180 participants were present at this conference and, among other things, heard a lecture on the Third Geneva Convention presented by Professor Conte (Italy).

In addition, the regional delegate went on mission to Ghana from 11 to 14 February as part of the preparatory work for a seminar on international humanitarian law and its dissemination; this seminar is being organized by the Ghana Red Cross with the support of the ICRC and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and will take place in Accra from 29 April to 3 May 1985.

Chad

About 39 tonnes of food and 14 tonnes of various relief supplies were delivered by the ICRC for detainees in the central prison in N'Djamena.

An ICRC doctor continued checking the detainees' state of health, concentrating mainly on combatting malaria.

Latin America

Mission from Geneva

From 24 to 27 January, Mr. Jacques Moreillon, ICRC Director for General Affairs, accompanied by the deputy delegate general for Latin America and the Caribbean and two other delegates, participated in the Second Inter-American Seminar on State Security, Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, jointly organized in San José (Costa Rica) by the ICRC and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights.

El Salvador

Continuing their protection activities in El Salvador, ICRC delegates carried out 183 visits in January to places of detention in the capital and in the provinces and saw and registered 175 new security detainees; in February they had access to 125 detainees during a series of 144 visits.

The ICRC's tracing offices in San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana registered 242 tracing requests concerning people reported missing or presumed to be in detention; moreover, they continued to receive several hundred visitors a month wanting to know what had happened to their relatives.

There was a marked increase in medical activities by comparison with the latter months of 1984 since problems hampering movements had been largely overcome; consequently the ICRC and the Salvadoran Red Cross medical teams went on an average of about forty rounds of visits each month in the field and gave 10,558 medical consultations throughout the entire country (6,068 in the eastern departments); furthermore, they carried out 1,745 dental examinations. Medicaments and medical supplies were distributed to health stations, mobile clinics and branches of the National Red Cross Society in the townships visited.

Food aid to the displaced civilian population in January amounted to 124 tonnes of food for 14,200 people in the central departments and almost 640 tonnes for 78,000 beneficiaries in the eastern departments. For February these figures were, respectively, 248 tonnes for 27,500 people and approximately 624 tonnes for

73,500 people. It should be noted that distributions are carried out by ICRC delegates in co-operation with teams from the Salvadoran Red Cross.

Nicaragua

Between 21 January and 14 February, ICRC delegates visited the "Zona Franca" prison in Managua and had interviews without witnesses with 371 security detainees. They also had access to five farming colonies which were part of the provincial penitentiary system. Some 38 tonnes of relief supplies, mainly food (worth approximately 357,000 Swiss francs), were supplied to the detainees and their needy families (826 families benefited from ICRC aid in January and 1,300 families in February).

In addition, 42 requests to trace missing persons were registered and 927 family messages exchanged (mainly between Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras and their relatives in Nicaragua). At the end of February the head of the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva visited the tracing office in Managua and was able to take stock of its various activities.

In the Puerto Cabezas region, along the Atlantic coast, 1,142 families of displaced people—i.e. some 5,700 beneficiaries—received aid in February (for insecurity reasons it was not possible to take any action in January). In the Bluefields region (along the southern part of the Atlantic coast) 610 families received aid in January and 673 in February. A total of 70 tonnes of food was distributed. This work was carried out jointly by the ICRC and the Nicaraguan Red Cross in co-operation with the Nicaraguan Institute for Social Welfare (INSSBI).

In addition, an ICRC nurse went to the area along the Atlantic coast; consultations were given to 445 patients and basic medical kits were handed over to the people in charge of five villages.

The ICRC also re-stocked several branches of the National Red Cross Society with emergency supplies (food and various items). Moreover, medicaments and medical supplies, worth 27,500 Swiss francs, were given to hospitals belonging to the Ministry of Health and to centres belonging to the Nicaraguan Red Cross.

About one thousand people attended lectures on the dissemination of knowledge of the basic rules of humanitarian law, which were held in eight branches of the National Society situated in conflict areas.

Colombia

The annual meeting of the Colombian Red Cross (26 and 27 February) was attended by the ICRC delegates in Bogotá and provided an opportunity to determine the National Society's action programme as regards disseminating knowledge of the Red Cross principles and the basic rules of humanitarian law.

ICRC delegates also took part in a meeting of Red Cross volunteer workers which was held in Cali from 28 February to 2 March; one day of the meeting was devoted to the activities of the National Societies in the context of armed conflicts.

Visits to places of detention

In *Peru*, between 28 January and 21 February, ICRC delegates visited four places of detention both in the capital and the provinces. They saw a total of 444 people detained as a result of events.

In *Grenada*, an ICRC delegate visited Richmond Hill prison, on 20 and 21 February, and had access to 22 security detainees.

In *Uruguay*, a new round of visits began on 11 February to security detainees in all places of detention; by the end of the month the ICRC delegates had visited four prisons where 332 detainees were being held.

Asia—Pacific

Missions from Geneva

An ICRC delegation, headed by Mr Rudolf Jäckli, member of the Committee, and including Mr. Alain Modoux, head of the ICRC Information Department, and Mr. Jean de Courten, delegate general for Asia and the Pacific, took part in the Third Regional Conference of the National Societies of Asia and the Pacific which was held in Melbourne (Australia) from 4 to 9 February. Mr. Jäckli addressed the conference at its opening session and Mr. de Courten outlined the ICRC's work in the region between 1981 and 1984.

On his way to Melbourne, Mr. de Courten stopped off in *Thailand* on 28 January to assess the ICRC's work along the Khmer-Thai border.

On his way back from Melbourne, the ICRC delegate general stopped in *Indonesia*. He met in Jakarta the Minister of Justice and the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; with them he discussed problems related to the ICRC's protection activities in Indonesia and East Timor.

Conflict in Afghanistan

An ICRC delegate, accompanied by an interpreter, made two visits (3 January and 6 February) to three Soviet soldiers captured in Afghanistan by opposition movements and transferred to Switzerland by the ICRC for a two-year period of internment after agreement by all the parties concerned.

Pakistan

The ICRC delegation in Pakistan continued its medical assistance programmes as part of its overall work on behalf of the victims of the Afghan conflict.

In January and February 258 wounded were admitted to the surgical hospital in Peshawar and 528 operations were carried out; in addition 1,842 consultations were given to out-patients. The hospital in Quetta admitted 117 wounded and carried out 205 operations.

The first-aid teams of the Pakistan Red Cross at Parachinar, Miram Shah and Wana treated 126 wounded and evacuated many others to the hospital in Peshawar. The first-aid post at Chaman gave treatment to 46 wounded, of whom 36 were transferred to the hospital in Quetta.

Thirty-two participants passed their exams in the 27th and 28th first-aid courses organized in Peshawar. A similar type of course began in Quetta on 20 January and ended four weeks later; out of 16 participants chosen from 144 candidates, 15 passed the final exam.

Khmer-Thai border

During January and February fighting increased along the Khmer-Thai border, causing 240,000 Khmers to seek refuge on Thai soil. ICRC medical personnel continued to treat a large

number of war casualties and emergency cases in the surgical hospitals in Khao-I-Dang and Kab Cherng and at the dispensary at Dongrek and in various first-aid and preliminary examination posts along the border. There was a total of 656 admissions (including 466 war casualties) to Khao-I-Dang and 166 (including 80 war casualties) to Kab Cherng. It should be noted that the medical personnel includes specialists seconded to the ICRC by the Red Cross Societies of Canada, Denmark, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand and Norway.

The Australian and Japanese Red Cross Societies continued to supply respectively 400 and 100 units of blood, each month to the ICRC blood bank. The New Zealand Red Cross sent 120 units of blood.

The Thai Red Cross increased its medical teams along the border regions and continued its activities on behalf of the Khmer refugees and the Thai civilian population; these teams treated some 44,700 patients, including 34,540 Khmers.

The relief supplies distributed by ICRC delegates in the refugee camps and in the prison in Aranyaprathet came to 110,000 Swiss francs; they consisted mainly of paramedical items (hygiene requisites and maintenance products), bedding, cooking utensils, clothing and food.

The local ICRC Tracing Agency office forwarded 3,498 letters between refugees and their families living either in a camp along the Thai-Khmer border or abroad; in addition, it dealt with 1,969 requests to trace missing people and organized 1,209 transfers of people. The Thai Red Cross Tracing and Mailing Service, which concerns itself mainly with the Vietnamese boat people, registered 60 requests for news, instituted 61 enquiries and distributed 867 letters in January and February.

Kampuchea

The ICRC continued to supply medicaments and medical items to the hospitals and the blood bank in Phnom Penh and to the provincial hospitals in Kandal, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Cham, Kompong Speu and Kampot. The assistance provided in January and February was worth 147,000 Swiss francs.

In addition, relief supplies (sanitary and hygiene requisites, clothing, kitchen utensils), worth a total of 26,000 Swiss francs,

were given to orphanages in Kompong Cham, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Speu and Kampot.

The ICRC also continued to give logistic support to the medical teams of the French, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies working respectively in Phnom Penh, Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Cham.

In January and February, the ICRC flew in 6.7 tonnes of relief supplies (including five tonnes of medicaments) from Bangkok via Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh; in addition, two ships transported eleven tonnes of medical material from Singapore to Kampuchea, and two vehicles for the ICRC delegation in Phnom Penh.

Indonesia/East Timor

As part of the repatriation and family reunification programme for the inhabitants of East Timor, on 10 February the ICRC organized the transfer of one person to Australia. Since the beginning of this programme in 1984, 41 people have gone to Australia under the auspices of the ICRC.

Philippines

The series of visits to places of detention begun by the ICRC in July 1984 continued in January and February. Two teams of delegates, each including a doctor and an interpreter, visited 16 places of detention; the first team visited seven places of detention on the islands of Cebu, Negros and Bohol, and the second nine places on the islands of Leyte and Samar; the ICRC had access to a total of 70 detainees being held in these 16 places of detention.

Another team of ICRC delegates, including a medical coordinator and accompanied by representatives of the Philippine National Red Cross, went on a medical-nutritional mission to the provinces of Maguindanao and Davao del Norte, on the island of Mindanao. The purpose of the mission was to determine the nutritional state of recently displaced people receiving assistance provided jointly by the ICRC and the Philippine National Red Cross.

Papua New Guinea

From 18 to 24 February the ICRC regional delegate, based in Djakarta, went on mission to Papua New Guinea to take up contact with the National Society and to find out what was happening to the displaced persons from Irian Jaya.

Middle East

Conflict between Iran and Iraq

Against the background of the conflict between Iran and Iraq, the ICRC continued regularly to visit Iranian prisoners of war in Iraqi camps. Between 11 February and 7 March ICRC delegates had access to eight camps and four hospitals; they saw 9,248 prisoners of war and registered 67 new ones. In camps in the region of Meisan they also visited several thousand displaced Iranian families.

It must be noted that, since 10 October 1984, the ICRC has been unable to visit the camps for Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran because the Iranian authorities had suspended these visits after an incident in Gorgan camp.

The Mixed Medical Commission, composed of two ICRC doctors and an Iraqi doctor, examined the cases of wounded or sick Iranian prisoners of war eligible for repatriation in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention; it submitted for approval to the Iraqi Government a list of one hundred names of prisoners who met the required conditions for such repatriation.

In January and February 334,124 family messages were exchanged between Iraqi and Iranian prisoners of war and their families, through the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva.

Lebanon

During January and February—i.e. the period before and after the partial withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Sidon region—ICRC delegates were particularly active, in the rest of the occupied parts of southern Lebanon, for the protection of the civilian population, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. When the blockades were lifted, they went to many villages

that had been temporarily beleaguered by the occupying forces to assess the needs caused by the situation and supply the necessary assistance. They also regularly visited the Palestinian camps situated in the outskirts of Sidon and Tyre.

The ICRC continued to conduct complete monthly visits to Ansar camp, as well as weekly visits to register new prisoners. On 28 February, 1,687 people were being held in the camp by the Israeli military authorities.

ICRC delegates also had access to other places of detention run by the Israeli army in southern Lebanon (Nabatiyeh and Tyre) and *saw 21 people. They also conducted another visit to Atlit camp, in Israel, where 121 former prisoners from Ansar camp were being held, having not been released on 24 November 1983 when the camp was provisionally closed.*

On 9 February the ICRC visited three Israeli prisoners in the hands of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/General Command (PFLP/GC).

In January and February the ICRC Tracing Agency offices in Lebanon exchanged 35,799 family messages, mainly between detainees and their relatives living either in Lebanon or abroad; moreover, they dealt with 18 requests for news and organized five transfers of people.

ICRC delegates continued carrying out medical surveys, particularly in the southern part of the country. Medicaments and material (wheel-chairs, ambulance kits, etc.), worth approximately 50,000 Swiss francs, were given to 21 hospitals and 53 dispensaries in Beirut and southern Lebanon.

Four ambulances, donated by the Norwegian Red Cross to the ICRC during the events of February 1984 in Beirut and temporarily stored in Larnaca (Cyprus), were sent to Lebanon for use in the southern part of the country. The ICRC gave two ambulances to the Nabatiyeh and Marjayoun branches of the Lebanese Red Cross and medical material to the National Society.

The ICRC continued to stockpile emergency supplies (blankets, kitchen equipment) in Sidon and Tyre to enable it to deal rapidly with any contingencies. Some food distributions took place in Beirut, Tripoli and the region around Tyre.

Yemen Arab Republic

On 22 January the ICRC regional delegate for the Arabian peninsula, accompanied by a doctor, went to the Yemen Arab

Republic to visit places of detention. On 26 and 27 January ICRC delegates had access to the central prison in Sana'a and saw 72 security detainees. They then visited places of detention in the provinces, i.e. in Dhamar, Ibb, Taz, Hodeida and Saada.

While in Sana'a, the ICRC representatives had discussions with the Minister of the Interior, the Director-General of Prisons and the General Secretary of the Yemen Red Crescent.
