

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

November-December 1985

Africa

Angola

During November and December 1985, ICRC activities in Angola increased. This period of the year being between two harvests, the nutritional condition of the population on the Planalto seriously deteriorated. Distributions of food were therefore resumed from October onwards in most townships in the provinces of Huambo and Benguela, and from 18 November in the province of Bié where they had been suspended two months earlier after an ICRC aircraft had been damaged by a mine at Chitembo.

During the period under review, numerous security problems again considerably hampered the activities of the ICRC: the looting and destruction of the feeding centre in Kuito (Bié) by armed marauders on 22 November; the murder of an ICRC radio operator on 16 December in the region of Lobito (Benguela); the destruction of two clearly marked ICRC storage depots during an attack at Mungo, in the province of Huambo, on 23 December.

The ICRC nevertheless distributed 1,402 tonnes of food to 153,372 people in November; in December, the food assistance amounted to 1,576 tonnes supplied to 171,371 people.

On the medical side, over one thousand children received treatment each month in the feeding centres administered by the ICRC. The number of medical consultations given by ICRC personnel rose from 298 in November to 791 in December; meanwhile, local personnel treated some 27,400 patients. A total of 187 wounded or seriously sick persons were evacuated from the towns and transferred by the ICRC to hospitals in the provinces; 186 patients who had recovered were taken home. Finally, the Bomba Alta orthopaedic centre, staffed by two ICRC prosthetists and an ICRC physiotherapist, fitted 95 amputees with appliances and repaired 979 prostheses and crutches.

Ethiopia

Nutritional surveys carried out by the ICRC medical teams revealed that the state of health of the population in the northern regions of the country had improved more rapidly than anticipated in the west and south of Tigré, Wollo and Gondar, while the population in other regions continued to be affected by problems of security, famine and drought in Eritrea (Akele Guzai, the low coastal plains and the extreme north of the provinces of Akordat, Keren and Sahil) and in Tigré (central region, east and west of the main road crossing the region of Mekele).

As a result of the improvement observed, six therapeutic feeding centres could be closed during the months of November and December (Akordat and Ingerne in Eritrea; Mehony, Axum, Mekele and Maychew in Tigré). Only three centres remained operational at the end of the year in Tigré (at Axum, Adwa and Idaga Hamus) where 1,291 under-nourished children continued to receive treatment. However, the ICRC made provisions for setting up a nutritional rehabilitation programme at short notice should the need arise in any region, whether or not it had previously received assistance.

General distributions of food were also continued. In November and December, 8,599 and 10,774 tonnes of food respectively were distributed to 652,049 and 838,127 victims of the conflict and drought. The December figures, higher than foreseen, were due to the fact that numerous "final distributions" were carried out during surveys of the nutritional situation in regions from which the ICRC planned to withdraw. During November, incidents connected with the government's resettlement programme obliged the ICRC to interrupt its distribution in Tigré for about ten days, until the local authorities had provided satisfactory guarantees that they would not use ICRC distributions in the selection of candidates for this programme.

In the realm of dissemination, a seminar on "Ethiopian journalists and international humanitarian law" was organized by the ICRC, in co-operation with the Ethiopian Red Cross, at Addis Ababa from 19 to 21 December. This brought together some fifty members of the press, radio and television community from all over the country, as well as representatives from the ministries, the police and the party.

Uganda

ICRC activities in Uganda were conducted mainly from the Kampala delegation, but also from an office opened in October at Kasese, in the south-west of the country, under the control of the NRA (National Resistance Army).

In November, the head of the delegation, two ICRC delegates and a doctor carried out a survey in the neighbouring regions of Kasese, Fort

Portal, Hoima, Mubende, Mityana and M'pigi, controlled by the NRA. The team visited all the hospitals in these towns to assess their needs. Medicines and standard medical units were distributed to nine hospitals in five districts affected by the conflict.

Following the hijacking on 10 November of a Ugandan Airlines aircraft which was forced to land at Kasese, ICRC delegates were immediately able to visit the 42 passengers and 5 crew members aboard and organize the exchange of Red Cross messages between them and their families. At the request of the Ugandan Minister of Foreign Affairs, and after discussions with the NRA, the ICRC then arranged for 41 passengers who so wished to be flown to Kampala on 17 December aboard a small aircraft chartered in Nairobi which made two round trips from Entebbe to Kampala.

The ICRC also concerned itself with the plight of civilians and government troops under siege in the barracks at Masaka and M'Barara. Negotiations were conducted both with the government in Kampala and with the NRA with a view to carrying out a survey of needs in these places and providing the assistance required. On 11 November, those under siege in Masaka (1,329 soldiers, 374 women and 362 children) surrendered to the NRA and were allowed to be visited by an ICRC delegate and nurse, who provided them with assistance in the form of medicines and dried milk.

During a survey in the region of M'pigi, delegates evacuated a group of 600 people, victims of the events, to Kampala.

Assistance activities (distributions of food, blankets, soap and clothing) in aid of displaced persons continued east of the Bombo road, as well as in the Kibisi and Nakazi camps, and in the regions of Kampala and Luwero, benefiting about 2,000 people.

In November, delegates based in Kasese were able to visit 339 prisoners in three places of detention under the control of the NRA. In December, they visited 214 detainees in the hands of the Kampala government at the Luzira prison. Food and material assistance were supplied to the prisoners.

Because of the country being split into two, the ICRC, in co-operation with the Ugandan Red Cross, set up a tracing service for people who, living in the area controlled by the NRA, had no means of communicating with their relatives in regions under the control of government forces. Over 2,000 Red Cross messages could thus be exchanged in November and December.

Liberia

Following the attempted *coup d'état* of 12 November, two ICRC delegates and a male nurse arrived in Monrovia between 21 and 24 November to deliver emergency medical supplies to the hospitals, in co-operation with the National Red Cross Society.

After preliminary discussions with the competent authorities, delegates carried out a survey in Monrovia and Nimba (in the north east). Medicines and emergency medical supplies worth 22,000 Swiss francs were sent to Monrovia and distributed to various hospitals. In the Nimba region, limited and immediate assistance in the form of kitchen equipment, blankets, soap and clothing was supplied to a thousand people who had lost their possessions during looting, or whose houses had been destroyed. Finally, the ICRC offered its services to the authorities for visiting all people arrested in connection with the events.

Conflict between Burkina Faso and Mali

Following the border conflict which broke out on 25 December between Burkina Faso and Mali, the ICRC dispatched two delegates to Ouagadougou and Bamako respectively on 28 and 29 December.

In Burkina Faso, after consultation with the medical personnel of the League, the delegates purchased medicines locally and took them to the front (provinces of Houet and Kenedougou), accompanied by the President of the Burkina Be Red Cross Society. In accordance with customary ICRC procedures, the delegates had access to prisoners captured during the hostilities: 16 Burkina Be soldiers were visited at Bamako; two prisoners of war and a civilian were seen in Ouagadougou.

Chad

From 2 to 8 December, ICRC delegates conducted a comprehensive visit to the Detention Centre in N'Djamena housing 543 prisoners of war.

Latin America

Mission by the delegate-general

Mr. André Pasquier, ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, visited in turn *Argentina, Chile, Peru* and then *Colombia* during November.

In *Argentina*, accompanied notably by Mr. Jacques Moreillon, ICRC Director for General Affairs, Mr. Pasquier took part in the Inter-American seminar on humanitarian problems and human rights in cases of internal conflicts, which the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and the ICRC had organized in Buenos Aires for professors of law and eminent figures from the political world.

In *Chile*, between 17 and 23 November, where he was joined by the chief medical officer of the ICRC, Mr. Pasquier had talks with the highest authorities of the country: Mr. Hugo Rosende Subiabre, Minister of Justice, Mr. del Valle Allende, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ricardo Garcia Rodriguez, Minister of the Interior, Vice-Admiral Carvajal Prado, Minister of Defence, as well as with the director general of the "Central Nacional de Informaciones", the department of security. During these discussions, ICRC activities on behalf of persons detained for reasons of security were reviewed.

In November and December, ICRC delegates also continued regular visits to places of detention, both in Santiago and in the provinces. Special attention was paid to the prison of "Santiago Sur" where nine detainees went on hunger strike from 9 to 18 December.

Continuing his mission, Mr. Pasquier visited *Peru* from 25 to 29 November where he also had discussions at the highest level with the Peruvian authorities. He met Dr. Alan Garcia Pérez, President of the Republic, Dr. Abel Salinas Izaguirre, Minister of the Interior, Dr. Luis Gonzales Posada, Minister of Justice, and General Luis Abram Cavallerino, Chief of Staff of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces. The aim of these meetings was to describe the activities accomplished by the ICRC in the realm of detention, and to renew the offer to extend these activities to regions where the state of emergency had been declared and where the ICRC did not have access to places of detention, either civil or military. President Garcia agreed in principle to this offer. In addition, the Minister of the Interior confirmed that the ICRC was authorized to resume its visits, outside the emergency zones, to temporary places of detention under the authority of the "Policía de Investigaciones del Perú", these visits having been suspended in April 1985. In the course of this mission, the delegate-general also had talks with the President and the Secretary General of the Peruvian Red Cross.

Concluding his mission with a visit to *Colombia*, from 30 November to 3 December, Mr. Pasquier took stock of the situation with the ICRC regional delegation in Bogotá. He had talks with the Minister of Justice, Dr. Enrique Pajero Gonzales, concerning the latest series of visits made to places of detention under his Ministry's jurisdiction: between July and October, 160 security detainees were visited in some ten prisons in Bogotá and the provinces. Mr. Pasquier also met President Rueda and other senior members of the Colombian Red Cross.

El Salvador

ICRC delegates continued their regular visits to places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence (security corps and military garrisons) and the Ministry of Justice; they registered 169 new detainees in November and 162 in December. The Farabundo Marti

Liberation Front (FMLN) released three prisoners in November, a foreign national and two soldiers of the Salvadorean armed forces, and handed them over to the ICRC.

Food assistance to the civilian population of regions affected by the conflict benefited over 114 000 persons in November (700 tonnes of food supplies) and over 98 800 persons in December (570 tonnes).

Some 4,300 medical consultations were given in November and 4,500 in December in regions affected by the fighting; during the same period 870 dental consultations took place in November and a thousand in December. For the first time since July, a medical team was again able to cross the Rio Torola and give consultations to civilians in the north of the province of Morazan. The programmes for improving public hygiene (lectures to the civilian population, the building of latrines, improvements in the drinking water supply) and the monitoring of the nutritional situation of infants were continued.

During November and December, the second seminar on the fundamental principles of the Red Cross took place. This was organized by the National Society for its local sections, with the support of the ICRC. In addition, further lectures on international humanitarian law and the activities of the Red Cross were given to the Salvadorean armed forces in December, bringing to a total of 80 the number of lectures given in 1985, which were attended by over 16,000 people.

Nicaragua

In November and December, ICRC delegates visited five prison farms ("granjas") in the province of Managua, as well as the regional prison of Bluefields and that of Tipitapa in the capital, as part of the ICRC protection programme for security detainees.

Paraguay

Between 26 November and 2 December the third series of visits during 1985 to security detainees in Paraguay was carried out from the regional delegation in Buenos Aires. Thirteen detainees were visited in four places of detention: the prison of Tacumbu in Asunción under the authority of the Ministry of Justice, and the "Guardia de Seguridad" in Tacumbu, the department of "Asuntos técnicos" and the "delegación de gobierno" in Ciudad Presidente Stroessner (province of Alto Paraná these latter three prisons being under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior. During these visits, ICRC delegates had talks with the Minister of the Interior, the Chief of Police, the director general of the prison service and the President of the Paraguayan Red Cross.

Grenada

From the regional delegation in Bogotá a further visit was conducted in December to the Richmond Hill prison where there were 21 security detainees. The previous visit took place in February 1985.

Asia and the Pacific

Missions by the delegate-general

Mr. Jean de Courten, ICRC delegate-general for Asia and the Pacific, carried out a mission to China from 28 November to 3 December, at the invitation of the new leaders of the Chinese Red Cross. This mission provided an opportunity for numerous discussions with senior members of the National Society, in particular the Vice-President, as well as with the governmental authorities, including the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Following his mission to China, the delegate-general for Asia visited Manila, where he had discussions with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice, as well as with General Ramos, Acting Chief of Staff. Mr. de Courten also attended the Sixteenth Convention of the Philippine Red Cross.

Conflict in Afghanistan

Activities in Pakistan

During November and December the number of wounded able to reach the hospital in Peshawar diminished, while still remaining relatively high in view of the wintry conditions. The field hospital which had been set up in the outskirts of Peshawar at the beginning of September, in order to cope with the massive influx of wounded at the end of the summer, could be closed and dismantled at the beginning of November; most of the patients in this hospital had no further need of hospital treatment. Those who did were transferred to the main ICRC hospital which worked at full capacity during the two months under review. 161 wounded were admitted and 387 operations carried out in November, 130 wounded admitted and 302 operations carried out in December.

During this period, the situation remained stable at the ICRC hospital in Quetta (Baluchistan) where 55 wounded were admitted in November and 45 in December. The number of operations conducted was 140 and 125 respectively.

The six mobile first-aid teams (based at Parachinar, Miram Shah, Wana, Khar, Chaman and Badini), administered by the Pakistan Red Crescent with the help of the ICRC, continued to evacuate wounded Afghans to the ICRC hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta. During the two months under review, a total of 225 wounded received first aid, 165 of these being sent on to hospital. ICRC delegates carried out a survey in the south-west of Baluchistan to examine the feasibility of setting up a seventh mobile team in the region of Chagai. A sad incident must also be reported: the death of an ambulance driver attached to the Parachinar first-aid post, which occurred in a traffic accident during the evacuation of a wounded man.

The paraplegic rehabilitation centre admitted 14 new patients in November and 7 in December. At the end of the year, 73 patients were receiving rehabilitation treatment, including 27 Pakistanis.

The orthopaedic workshop continued its activities. Owing to the transfer of premises which took place during September and October, these activities were slightly reduced in November but resumed their usual rhythm in December. A total of 60 prostheses were made during the two months and 39 patients fitted with appliances.

The ICRC also continued its programme of training in first aid, the dissemination of basic humanitarian rules and the fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The 36th first-aid course took place from 21 November to 21 December and trained fifteen Afghan first-aiders. The 8th course in Quetta trained twelve first-aid workers and the 9th course started on 22 December. Two-day courses continued to be organized on a regular basis: in November and December 814 Afghans were taught the basic humanitarian rules as well as how to apply dressings in the course of 50 sessions held in Peshawar. At Quetta 14 courses were given for an audience of 163 students; four courses were also organized in Chaman and were attended by 58 people.

Conflict in Kampuchea

Activities along the Khmer-Thai border

The situation was relatively calm along the border and the ICRC continued its activities on behalf of some 240,000 persons displaced in the region, more than 135,000 of whom are gathered together in one place, "site 2".

Among the displaced persons is a particularly vulnerable group of some 4,000 Vietnamese refugees who have travelled there overland across Kampuchea. In order to ensure better protection for these people and facilitate long-term solutions, specific criteria for admission into their separate and protected sector were drawn up and submitted to the authorities concerned. These proposals were accepted and a re-examination of the cases,

under the responsibility of the Thai authorities, began on 3 December and was completed at the beginning of January 1986. Two translators engaged by the ICRC were available to the Commission that carried out this examination.

The ICRC Tracing Agency office in Thailand transmitted 6,083 letters between refugees and their families living either in a camp along the Khmer-Thai border, or abroad.

The ICRC surgical hospital at Khao-I-Dang treated slightly fewer war wounded than in previous months: 36 in November and 17 in December. On the other hand, the number of emergency medical cases continued to increase: 95 cases in November and 127 in December. The ICRC also continued evacuating the wounded from the border zone and transferring others from the first-aid centre it runs at Kap Cherg to the Khao-I-Dang hospital; 162 cases of this kind were handled in November and 129 in December.

First-aid courses were organized for the occupants of the various sites. In December, delegates began giving lectures on international humanitarian law to senior members of the administrative staff and first-aid workers at site 8, along the lines of those already given at site 2. Courses were also arranged for chiefs of Thai villages and districts in the Chanthaburi province in November, these courses being organized in close co-operation with the Thai Red Cross.

Activities in Kampuchea

As part of its assistance programme, the ICRC continued to supply medicines and medical equipment to the three hospitals and the blood bank in the capital, as well as to the five provincial hospitals in Takmao, Takeo, Kompong Speu, Kampot and Kompong Thom. Following these distributions, the ICRC conducted surveys to re-assess the various needs and to establish what use was being made of the relief provided. In addition, a complete unit for producing serum was supplied by the ICRC to the provincial hospital in Kampot.

The programme of assistance to orphanages was continued. In November, the ICRC delegate responsible for this project visited the orphanage at Prek Pneu in order to draw up long-term plans to improve housing and hygiene conditions, along the lines of plans drawn up for the orphanages at Pney Veng, Svay Rieng, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chnang and Kampot. The same process was repeated in December in Kampot, after which the orphanages in both Prek Pneu and Kampot were supplied with the necessary materials and equipment to build beds.

In addition, the ICRC continued to provide logistic and administrative support for the medical teams of three National Red Cross Societies (from France, Sweden and Switzerland). At the beginning of December, the Swiss Red Cross team withdrew from the Kompong Cham hospital where it had been working.

Vietnam

A seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law, organized by the ICRC and the Vietnamese Red Cross, was held in Hanoi from 12 to 16 November. This seminar was attended by senior members from Red Cross sections in 19 provinces in the north of the country and the capital, as well as by representatives of the Vietnamese authorities.

Indonesia and East Timor

ICRC delegates carried out a further series of visits to people in East Timor arrested in connection with the events, starting on 6 November. They visited the prisons of Cipinang and Tangerang in Jakarta and those of Comarca and Becora in Dili and saw 225 detainees. Delegates also visited the island of Atauro where there were still 936 displaced persons.

In December, a mission to assess the medical and nutritional situation was carried out in five villages of East Timor.

Burma

From mid-November, a programme of assistance to disabled people was started at the hospital for the disabled in Rangoon. This was organized jointly by the Burmese Red Cross, the Ministry of Health and the ICRC. Three ICRC technicians are training Burmese personnel in physiotherapy and the production of prostheses.

Middle East

Lebanon

Between 20 and 24 November violent fighting broke out between rival factions in West Beirut. During these few days, ICRC activities were conducted from the cover of the Beirut delegation and from an emergency office situated in the southern suburbs. The most urgent medical needs could be met, due to the reinforcement of the medical team which comprised, during this period, a medical co-ordinator, a medical administrator and a nurse working from the shelter of the delegation; the emergency office in the southern suburbs was run by a nurse who set up stocks of medical equipment. During the brief lulls in hostilities, medicines and medical equipment were distributed to the hospitals and dispensaries: after

the cease-fire on 24 November, these distributions continued as and where required. The urgent need for blood was met by the Norwegian and Swiss Red Cross Societies, which sent 240 units immediately distributed by the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross to the hospitals in Beirut.

On 9 and 17 December respectively, at the request of the "Palestinian Red Crescent", the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross conveyed 19 wounded persons from Borj el Brajneh to Beirut international airport; from there they were flown abroad to undergo surgery.

In addition to these medical activities, delegates continued their rounds to survey needs in the hospitals and dispensaries in Beirut, Sidon, Tyre and Jezzine, preparatory to providing the necessary supplies. In November and December they distributed 592 standard emergency kits worth approximately 160,000 Swiss francs, as well as medical equipment and medicines valued at some 54,500 Swiss francs.

Furthermore, the ICRC provided relief (blankets and food) to families (approximately 13,000 beneficiaries) while the Tracing Agency offices forwarded 1,808 family messages during November and December, as well as registering 13 tracing requests.

The ICRC also continued its activities in the orthopaedic centres of Beit Chebab, Sidon and Damascus, where 63 prostheses and 27 orthoses were produced during November and December. During this period, orthopaedic consultations were also given in Mreije, in the southern suburbs, and at Falougha in the Chouf.

Conflict between Iraq and Iran

The ICRC continued its visits to Iranian prisoners of war held in Iraq; conversely, it was not able to resume its protection activities for Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran which were suspended by the Iranian authorities on 10 October 1984.

During a fresh series of visits to Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq, which began on 17 November and was completed on 16 December, 9,847 Iranian prisoners of war were visited in nine camps and four hospitals, and 16 new Iranian prisoners of war were registered.

In November and December, 83,172 family messages addressed to Iranian prisoners of war and their families, and 179,827 family messages for Iraqi prisoners of war and their families were exchanged through the ICRC Central Tracing Agency in Geneva.

In addition, between 5 and 7 November, ICRC delegates visited displaced Kurd civilians interned in Ramadi camp; they distributed 331 Red Cross messages there and collected 525 messages addressed to internees' families.

Two repatriation operations for prisoners of war took place in November and December. On 21 November 17 elderly Iranian prisoners of

war, selected by a Mixed Medical Commission, were repatriated, under the auspices of the ICRC, to their country of origin. ICRC delegates accompanied them from Bagdad to Ankara, aboard an Iraqi aircraft, where they were handed over to representatives of the Iranian authorities. Other ICRC delegates, who had come from Teheran, accompanied the released prisoners, aboard an Iranian aircraft, to the Iranian capital. On 15 December Iran repatriated 97 Iraqi prisoners to their country of origin with the co-operation of the Turkish Red Crescent.

Starting on 4 November, a Mixed Medical Commission made up of two ICRC doctors and an Iraqi doctor made a round of the nine prisoner-of-war camps and the three military hospitals in Iraq, where they examined the cases of sick or wounded prisoners of war eligible for repatriation under the terms of the Third Convention. Following this round of visits, the early repatriation of 82 Iranian prisoners was recommended and submitted for approval to the Iraqi authorities.
