

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Mr. Alexandre Hay, Doctor honoris causa, Geneva University

Mr. Alexandre Hay, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, received an honorary doctorate from Geneva University, together with eight other eminent figures from scientific, cultural, teaching and religious fields.

At the traditional degree-conferring ceremony, which took place in St. Peter's Cathedral in Geneva on 22 May, Mr. Charles-André Junod, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, made a speech in praise of President Hay, an extract of which is reproduced below:

In July 1976 Mr. Hay left the realm of finance to assume the presidency of the ICRC, where he succeeded another Genevese citizen, Mr. Eric Martin. In the performance of his new duties Mr. Hay displayed the same qualities of a realistic and shrewd diplomat that he had already shown in economic affairs. While supporting the ICRC's efforts to perfect international humanitarian law, he has played a decisive role in safeguarding the effectiveness of that law, seriously threatened as it is not only by a certain disintegration of the international community, but also and above all by the changing nature of armed conflicts whose international character is often more tenuous. By always striving to avoid offending nationalistic sensibilities which might block intervention by the ICRC, he has been able to ensure that it is not excluded from these new conflicts but can continue, under the emblem of the Geneva Conventions, to bring the victims, civilians especially, the protection and solace they continue to expect from the institution created by Henry Dunant.

“The Geneva Law Faculty, which was quite naturally the first to take an interest in the teaching of international humanitarian law, felt that the four-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the Reformation, which constitutes one of our city’s chief claims to fame, was a particularly appropriate occasion to honour the jurist who for the past ten years has outstandingly and efficiently been presiding over the fortunes of the ICRC.”

This public tribute to the President of the ICRC honours all those who have the privilege to work under his leadership. The *International Review of the Red Cross* expresses here the great appreciation felt by all.

Missions by the President of the ICRC

During May, Mr. Alexandre Hay, President of the ICRC, carried out a series of missions taking him first to the United Kingdom (1-2 May) and then to Asia (3-15 May), where he visited Malaysia, Thailand, Burma, India and Bangladesh.

In *London*, Mr. Hay had a meeting with Sir Geoffrey Howe, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which was concerned mainly with the ratification by the United Kingdom of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions.

In *Kuala Lumpur*, the ICRC President took part in the opening ceremony of the Second workshop on the dissemination of international humanitarian law for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of Asia and the Pacific (see the section “In the Red Cross world”). He also met the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia.

In *Bangkok*, Mr. Hay had talks with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as with Princess Sirindhorn, Executive Vice-President of the Thai Red Cross Society, and the Society’s Secretary-General.

In *Rangoon*, President Hay visited the prosthetic centre of the hospital for the disabled where the ICRC carries out assistance work in conjunction with the Ministry of Health and the Burma