

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

ICRC 'hot line' for journalists on dangerous professional missions

Concerned by the increasing hazards facing journalists on professional missions, the ICRC will try to intensify its efforts on their behalf as persons protected by international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts, in conformity with the humanitarian mandate vested on it by the international community. A 'hot line' has now been put into service at the ICRC, so that the editors and professional organizations concerned can rapidly contact it and request its aid in case of need.

The ICRC can take various forms of action, such as tracing missing journalists, registering and transmitting to their families and the professional organizations concerned all information received after notification of their capture or arrest, asking permission for an ICRC delegate to visit them if they are kept in detention, and exchanging messages between detained journalists and their families.

The 'hot line' has been set up in response to a specific request made at a round-table meeting on "the safety of journalists on dangerous professional missions", which was held in April 1985 at Mont-Pélerin, in Switzerland, under the auspices of the ICRC. This meeting was attended by the representatives of 16 international media organizations. (*See International Review of May-June 1985*).

To inform press members and national and international media organizations about the new 'hot line' and how to use it, the ICRC has published a pamphlet setting forth the possibilities of ICRC action and practical ways in which it hopes to protect and assist journalists who fall victim to situations of armed conflict, but also explaining the limits and obstacles that can slow down or even prevent its active intervention.

(This pamphlet can be obtained from the ICRC Publications and Documentation Service, 17, avenue de la Paix, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland.)