

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

September-October 1985

Africa

Angola

The ICRC having been invited as an observer to the ministerial conference of the non-aligned countries, held in Luanda from 2 to 7 September, Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, Director for Operational Activities at the ICRC, and Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, delegate-general for Africa, were received by Mr. José Eduardo Dos Santos, President of the People's Republic of Angola. This meeting provided an opportunity for reviewing the assistance activities undertaken by the ICRC in aid of populations displaced by the fighting in several regions of the country.

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On 18 September, following an incident in which an ICRC aircraft was damaged and a locally recruited ICRC employee killed by a mine planted on the runway at Chitembo, relief operations were suspended in the province of Bié ("Planalto" region) until the ICRC could obtain the necessary guarantees concerning the safety of Red Cross personnel. The ICRC nevertheless continued to build stocks and organize shipments of foodstuffs and seed by transport aircraft from the port of Lobito to the province of Huambo from where the towns in the region were supplied by light aircraft and occasionally by road.

In September, 397.5 tonnes of foodstuffs were distributed to some 37,200 persons. In October, 1,317 tonnes of food and seed were provided to 169,425 persons.

In the context of medical assistance, an average of 900 children suffering from malnutrition were being treated at five ICRC feeding centres. In addition, ICRC medical staff gave 351 consultations, organized the evacuation of 138 persons, who had been wounded in fighting or were otherwise seriously ill, to outlying hospitals, and returned to their homes 216 patients who had completed their treatment. The orthopaedic centre in Bomba Alta, staffed by two prosthetic technicians and a physiotherapist from the ICRC, fitted 93 amputees with prostheses and repaired 1,082 orthopaedic items.

Finally, the ICRC Tracing Agency in Angola dealt with requests for news concerning 32 persons in September and October. In addition, it reunited 25 families, received 35 Red Cross messages and passed on 21 of them.

Republic of South Africa

From 2 to 24 September, ICRC delegates carried out their annual series of prison visits in South Africa. They were permitted access to nine places of detention where they saw, in accordance with established criteria, 309 sentenced prisoners and seven persons being held under Section 28 of the "Internal Security Act".

The delegates carried on their assessment tour in the regions of the Cape, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Kwandelebe, Gazankulu and Johannesburg, in order to determine the needs of the victims of the current situation.

The delegation in Pretoria continued its assistance programmes in which 423 food parcels were provided to former detainees or to the families of current detainees who are in need. Various other relief articles worth a total of 51,000 Swiss francs were distributed during September and October. The ICRC also supplied blankets and cooking utensils (to the value of 35,500 Swiss francs) to refugees from Mozambique living in the "homeland" of Gazankulu.

Namibia/South-West Africa

At Windhoek prison, on 26 September, ICRC delegates visited 21 Namibian prisoners and detainees who had been transferred there from two places of detention in South Africa. This came after much effort by the ICRC to have them transferred in order to

enable the detainees' families—most of whom live in northern Namibia—to visit them.

In the continuing programme to assist detainees, former detainees and detainees' families who are in need, the ICRC provided, in September and October, 128 food parcels and various relief articles to the value of 8,500 Swiss francs. Some four tonnes of enriched food, worth 4,700 Swiss francs, were provided to school-children suffering from malnutrition.

Ethiopia

The relief operation launched jointly by the ICRC and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society to assist persons affected by the drought and the conflict in Ethiopia continued to be carried out with great energy during September and October. In September, the amount of foodstuffs distributed by the ICRC rose to 10,082 tonnes and reached 731,612 persons in Eritrea, Tigray, Wollo, Gondar and Hararge. In October, 10,503 tonnes went to 863,926 persons, bringing to 82,735 tonnes the total quantity of foodstuffs distributed since the beginning of the year.

The nine therapeutic feeding centres run by the ICRC in Tigray and Eritrea admitted 1,632 undernourished children in September and 1,825 in October. In addition to medical attention, these patients, according to their condition, receive between four and six meals per day.

In order to disseminate the basic rules of humanitarian law and Red Cross principles and ideals, the ICRC organized, in September and October, 85 lecture-discussions which were attended by various types of audiences, totalling 75,000 persons, in Addis Ababa, Wollo, Hararge, Sidamo and Bale.

Uganda

The main activities of the ICRC in Uganda were impeded during September because of unsafe conditions, especially along the Bombo and Hoima roads in the region known as the "Luwero triangle".

During the month of October, ICRC delegates took steps to explain to the highest Ugandan authorities the role of the ICRC and obtain from them guarantees of access to the victims of the

conflict. Relief supplies were distributed to small groups of displaced persons in Luwero, Kibizi, Nakazi and in the Kampala region to the east of Bombo. About sixty persons, mostly women and children, were transferred from Luwero to Kampala under the auspices of the ICRC.

In spite of the security imperatives which hampered its movements, the ICRC provided some 70 tonnes of food and other relief supplies (blankets, soap, etc.) to displaced populations during September and October.

Basic medicaments and bandages were distributed to three dispensaries serving some thousand displaced persons in Bamunika and Zirowe. In addition, a dispensary was opened in Luwero (a region having no medical infrastructure), which the ICRC equipped with medicaments and to which it sent a medical team once a week to give consultations. The dispensary serves about 4,000 displaced persons.

Finally, while travelling in connection with protection and relief activities ICRC delegates gathered family messages and tracing requests and reunited several families whose members had been living in the "triangle".

Zaire

In September, ICRC delegates in Zaire twice visited two places of detention in Kinshasa where they saw 165 detainees. In the same period, they had access to 259 persons being held in four places of detention in Lubumbashi. In October, four visits were made to three places of detention in the capital where 44 detainees eligible for ICRC protection were held.

Relief articles and medical assistance were provided to detainees and members of their families in need.

Latin America

Missions by the Delegate-General

From 21 September to 4 October, Mr. André Pasquier, the ICRC's delegate-general for Central America and the Caribbean, undertook a mission to *Costa Rica*, *El Salvador* and *Nicaragua*.

In San José, Mr. Pasquier met with the regional delegation based there to take stock of the ICRC's activities. In San Salvador, he met President Napoleon Duarte, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff of the armed forces. Finally, in Managua, he had talks with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, among others.

El Salvador

During September, ICRC delegates visited 222 security detainees in the course of 122 visits carried out in places of detention under the jurisdiction of the Ministries of Justice and Defence. In October, the delegates were allowed access to the same number of detainees during 104 visits which were carried out in accordance with the ICRC's established criteria.

Elsewhere, following the abduction on 10 September of Mrs. Inés Guadalupe Duarte, the daughter of the President of the Republic of El Salvador, and one of her friends, the ICRC was asked by the parties concerned to carry out the practical terms of the agreement concluded on 22 October between the Salvadorian government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN). This agreement provided, on the one hand, for the simultaneous release of President Duarte's daughter and that of FMLN members held by the government and, on the other, for the freeing of 23 mayors and municipal officials who had been captured by the guerillas, in exchange for the evacuation to other countries of a number of seriously wounded guerillas. And so, on 24 October, as Inés Duarte and her friend were set free, 18 detainees were released by the government and transferred by the ICRC to Tenancingo, while four others were taken to the embassies of Panama and Costa Rica in San Salvador. The wounded, 101 in all, were picked up at twelve different points and taken to the airport in San Salvador where, accompanied by ICRC medical personnel, they boarded two planes, one bound for Panama, the other for Mexico City. Finally, the 23 mayors and municipal officials were freed, again with the ICRC acting as intermediary. This operation necessitated the use of all of the ICRC delegation's personnel and logistical resources, backed up by ambulances and staff from the Salvadorian Red Cross Society.

The ICRC distributed 590 tonnes of food aid in September to 99,000 civilians affected by the fighting. In October, however, the

programme was disrupted by violent clashes and traffic restrictions imposed by the opposition movements. In all, 319 tonnes of food-stuffs were distributed to 49,000 persons.

Medical teams from the ICRC and the Salvadorian Red Cross Society, based in San Salvador and San Miguel, continued to make "sorties" into areas requiring medical assistance, where they treated the sick and distributed medicaments and other medical supplies according to need. In September they gave 6,845 medical and 908 dental consultations and, in October, 1,880 medical and 171 dental consultations.

Nicaragua

In September, ICRC delegates visited the provincial prisons of Juigalpa, Granada, Esteli, Chinandega and Matagalpa. There they interviewed without witness 186 security detainees and registered seven new detainees. Medical delegates gave consultations to 115 detainees. Some 59 tonnes of relief supplies, worth 146,000 Swiss francs, were provided as part of the programme of assistance for detainees and their families.

Between 8 October and 1 November, ICRC delegates visited the "Zona Franca" penitentiary in Managua. They saw 566 detainees, 230 of whom were given medical consultations. The aid provided to detainees and their families during this period amounted to 91 tonnes (worth 250,000 francs).

Some 800 Red Cross messages were collected and distributed by the ICRC Tracing Agency's office in Managua. Most of these were for detainees and their families.

In addition, the ICRC, in conjunction with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, continued its programme to assist displaced persons in the regions along the Atlantic coast. Thus, 65 tonnes of relief supplies (foodstuffs, blankets, cooking utensils) worth 112,000 Swiss francs were distributed in September and October to some 4,000 persons. Displaced populations were provided with a further 79 tonnes of relief supplies worth 161,000 Swiss francs by the ICRC in co-operation with the Nicaraguan Institute for Social Welfare (INSSBI) and the National Society.

Asia-Pacific

Conflict in Afghanistan

A Soviet soldier, who had been captured in Afghanistan by Afghan opposition movements and transferred to Switzerland by the ICRC, decided to return to the Soviet Union after reaching the end of the two-year period of internment agreed to by all the parties concerned. He left Switzerland on 23 October.

As of 31 October 1985, two Soviet soldiers remained interned in Switzerland.

Pakistan

The ICRC delegation in Peshawar decided to launch an emergency operation to meet the medical needs of a wave of Afghan refugees wounded in the fighting taking place in their country's interior. On 6 September, a fully equipped field hospital, which had been provided by the Norwegian Red Cross, was set up in Hayatabad, a suburb of Peshawar. It went into operation 48 hours later. Two Scandinavian surgical teams, assisted by seven nurses from the Danish Red Cross and the New Zealand Red Cross, worked round the clock performing minor operations on patients transferred from the main ICRC hospital, which was filled to capacity. During September, 268 wounded were admitted to the Peshawar hospital, 130 of them being transferred to the field hospital. In all, 747 operations were carried out. The two hospitals performed 499 operations during October.

The surgical hospital in Quetta admitted 98 wounded persons in September and October. In this period, 235 operations were performed and 950 outpatients given treatment.

The six ambulance teams, which are run by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society with financial support from the ICRC, continued to transport wounded Afghans to the ICRC hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta. Each of the teams has an ambulance equipped for first aid and the treatment of minor injuries. They are posted in Parachinar, Miram Shah, Wana, Khar, Chaman and Badini—the main crossing points between Afghanistan and Pakistan. In September and October these teams treated 397 wounded, 296 of whom they transported to ICRC hospitals.

In addition, 23 patients were admitted in September and October to the ICRC centre for paraplegics in Peshawar. This brought to 513 the number of paraplegics who have come to the centre since it was opened in September 1981.

Khmer-Thai Border

In spite of the relative calm along the Khmer-Thai border during September and October, medical staff supplied to the ICRC by the Austrian, Danish, Finnish and Icelandic Red Cross, the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany and the British Red Cross Society continued to work steadily in the Khao-I-Dang hospital, where the number of patients rose to 313, of whom 94 had been wounded in the fighting. The Australian and Japanese Red Cross Societies made a monthly contribution of 400 and 100 units of blood respectively to the ICRC blood bank in Khao-I-Dang.

Medical teams from the Thai Red Cross Society continued to assist Khmer refugees and the civilian Thai population in the border area. From 21 August to 20 October, the teams treated 45,745 patients, 35,097 of them Khmer.

The ICRC Tracing Agency in Thailand exchanged 8,213 letters between refugees and their families living either in other border camps or in other countries. It also received 1,912 tracing requests, transferred 56 persons from one camp to another and arranged for 50 families to be reunited. The Tracing and Mailing Service, which was set up by the Thai Red Cross Society and deals with Vietnamese "boat people", received 159 requests for news and forwarded 303 letters.

ICRC delegates distributed relief supplies worth 12,200 Swiss francs in the refugee camps and the prison in Aranyaprathet. These consisted mainly of toilet articles and cleaning products, bedding, cooking utensils and clothing.

Kampuchea

As part of its assistance programme, the ICRC continued to provide medicaments and other medical supplies to the three hospitals and the blood bank in Phnom Penh and to the provincial hospitals in Kandal, Kompong Speu, Kompong Chnnang and Kompong Cham. The aid provided during September and October was worth a total of 140,000 Swiss francs.

Aid was also provided to two particularly needy orphanages in Kompong Cham and Kompong Chnnang.

In addition, the ICRC flew 5 tonnes of relief supplies from Bangkok to Phnom Penh via Ho Chi Minh City and sent three tonnes of equipment by sea from Singapore to Kampuchea.

Philippines

On 18 September, ICRC delegates completed their tour of visits to places of detention in region 10 (northern Mindanao) which they had begun in August. They had access to 107 persons in 25 places of detention.

From 1 to 23 October, 29 detainees were seen in six places of detention in region 3 (the provinces of Zambales, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Bataan, north of Manila). In the same month, visits also began in region 11 (eastern Mindanao) and were to continue until the end of November. At the end of October, ICRC delegates had visited 199 persons in 12 places of detention in the region.

It should be noted that these visits were conducted in accordance with the ICRC's established criteria.

Taiwan

Six Taiwanese fishermen who had been shipwrecked in the East China Sea on 31 August returned on 14 October from Beijing to Taipei via Hong Kong, under the auspices of the ICRC. The six men, three of whom had been seriously injured in the accident, were handed over by the Red Cross Society of China to an ICRC delegate sent from Geneva. The head of the ICRC regional delegation based in Manila was present when they arrived in Taipei.

It should be noted that it was at the request of all the parties concerned that the ICRC acted as intermediary in this operation.

Middle East

Lebanon

In September and October, the ICRC in Lebanon was active essentially in providing assistance to victims of the violent clashes between rival factions in Tripoli (northern Lebanon) which resulted in many dead and wounded and forced thousands of families to flee.

ICRC delegates made regular assessment tours of the hospitals and dispensaries in Tripoli where the wounded were being treated. There they delivered medical supplies according to need and to the extent that transport was available. The severity of the fighting,

however, often forced them to remain in their shelter where they set up a first-aid post and endeavoured to maintain contact with the medical treatment centres in order to provide them with emergency medical supplies.

Throughout the fighting, ICRC delegates attempted to negotiate the passage of a convoy in order to evacuate the wounded. Finally, on 5 October, the convoy entered Tripoli. It was made up of six ICRC vehicles, including two trucks loaded with medical supplies and medicaments, and 10 ambulances from the Lebanese Red Cross. There were also about fifty persons on board—a surgical team sent by the Danish and Finnish Red Cross, delegates and first-aid workers. Thirty-nine wounded were immediately evacuated by the ambulances. The surgical team was based at the Islami hospital, which was declared neutral and placed under Red Cross protection. The team went straight to work, co-ordinating its activities with the medical personnel already there. Within several days it had carried out twenty operations and treated fifty other patients. By 9 October, relative calm had returned and the ICRC surgical team was relieved by Lebanese medical personnel.

In addition, a field hospital which had been provided to the ICRC in 1982 by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany and held in reserve at Zahlé (Bekaa) was brought to northern Lebanon and set up 5 km south of Tripoli. The hospital, which is equipped for minor surgery and has 80 beds, treated wounded and sick persons evacuated from Tripoli. It was dismantled on 8 October and returned to Zahlé. Those still in need of treatment were then transferred either to the Islami hospital or to other treatment centres.

The Lebanese Red Cross, for its part, operated its first-aid posts in Tripoli throughout the fighting, even though two of them had been hit by shellfire. The first-aid workers carried out their mission with admirable dedication. Tragedy struck when, while taking part in the evacuation of wounded, a volunteer from the National Society was fatally injured by a shell fragment.

The medical assistance (emergency kits, medicaments and medical supplies) provided by the ICRC in and around Tripoli was valued at 100,820 Swiss Francs. In addition, 400 units of blood were given by the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany and the Swiss Red Cross in response to a request from the Lebanese Red Cross.

ICRC relief operations assisted several thousand displaced persons both in the city itself and in nearby suburbs. Foodstuffs and

blankets were also provided to hospitals and dispensaries which were left with no other source of supply, the city having been cut off from the rest of the country. In September and October, the ICRC gave some 14,100 family parcels (basic foodstuffs, soap, candles) and 27,055 blankets to around 77,500 persons. This assistance was valued at 650,000 francs.

In addition to the medical activities carried out in Tripoli and area, the ICRC continued regularly to visit the hospitals of Beirut and to provide them with medical supplies. The medical delegates also carried on their assessment tours in the regions of Sidon, Tyre and Jezzine. In September and October, 547 standard emergency units, worth 192,000 Swiss francs, as well as medical supplies and medicaments worth 155,000 francs were delivered to a dozen hospitals and 20 dispensaries across Lebanon.

The ICRC also distributed relief supplies (foodstuffs, blankets) to 2,500 members of families which had sought refuge in southern Lebanon after fleeing fighting in the Palestinian camp of Bourj Brajneh south of Beirut in mid-September.

Finally, the ICRC Tracing Agency's offices in Lebanon transmitted 2,473 Red Cross messages in September and October, mostly concerning civilians affected by the events in Tripoli and their families. It also dealt with 15 enquiries concerning missing persons and organised 119 transfers of persons and repatriations.

Conflict between Iran and Iraq

In activities related to the conflict between Iran and Iraq, the ICRC continued regularly to visit the Iranian prisoners of war in *Iraq*. However, it is still not able to carry out its visits to camps holding Iraqi prisoners of war in *Iran*, visits which were suspended by the Iranian authorities more than a year ago.

In the course of a complete series of visits which ended in late October, the ICRC delegates in Baghdad visited 9,832 Iranian prisoners of war in nine camps and four hospitals. Since the beginning of hostilities in September 1980, the ICRC has registered 10,552 Iranian prisoners of war in Iraq.

In addition, from 30 September to 4 October, the ICRC delegates visited Iranian civilians from Khuzistan interned in the Meisan region. There they transmitted some 5,000 family messages from Iran.

On three occasions in September and October, prisoners of war were repatriated. On two occasions the prisoners of war were

Iranian, on the third, Iraqi. On 5 September, 28 Iranian POWs, selected by a mixed medical commission, were released by Iraq and repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC. ICRC delegates accompanied them from Baghdad to Ankara, where they handed them over to representatives of the Iranian authorities. An Iranian aircraft then took the freed prisoners, still accompanied by ICRC delegates, to Teheran. Iran, for its part, unilaterally repatriated 104 Iraqi prisoners via Ankara on 2 October with the co-operation of the Turkish Red Crescent Society. Finally, on 9 October, the ICRC organized the repatriation of 55 Iranian prisoners of war. Accompanied by ICRC delegates, they were brought by an Iraqi aircraft to the Turkish capital, where they were handed over to representatives of the Iranian authorities who had come from Teheran together with an ICRC delegate. An Iranian aircraft then took the released prisoners to Teheran, following the same procedure as on 5 September, again with the close co-operation of the Turkish Red Crescent Society.

During September and October, 104,848 family messages between Iranian prisoners of war and their families, and 171,898 messages between Iraqi prisoners of war and their families were exchanged through the Central Tracing Agency at ICRC headquarters in Geneva.

Europe

Missions by the Delegate-General

— From 9 to 13 September Mr Peter Küng, delegate-general of the ICRC for Europe and North America, went on mission to Czechoslovakia to make contact with government authorities and leaders of the National Society of the Red Cross. Mr Küng met the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, among others, and participated in a Red Cross Day held in Prague, during which he made a speech about the activities of the ICRC. Accompanied by the Vice-President of the National Society, the ICRC delegate-general also visited Bohemia where he met numerous representatives of local sections of the Red Cross.

— Mr Küng spent September 24 and 25 in London where he had a long discussion meeting with the new Chairman of the British Red Cross, Lady Limerick, and the new Director-General, Mr J. Burke-Gaffney. The ICRC delegate-general also had the opportunity to meet Mr James Lester, M.P., member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.
