

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

January-February, 1987

Africa

Sudan

In southern Sudan, relief supplies were distributed in January in the Narus region, where 10,200 persons received 145 tonnes of sorghum, 28 tonnes of beans and 18 tonnes of oil. Further distributions of foodstuffs were carried out in the first week of February (291 tonnes). On 18 February the recipients of the "seed and implements" project were once more registered systematically: 22,800 persons were registered in Narus and the three neighbouring camps. Distributions began at the end of February. The Narus feeding centre continued to admit children suffering from malnutrition: in January, 476 children were cared for at the centre. A surgical hospital, gift of the Finnish Red Cross, was set up at Lokichokio, in Kenya, to treat wounded persons arriving from southern Sudan. The despatch of food aid to Tigray and Eritrea was continued as in the past. In January, 1,230 tonnes were sent to Tigray and 730 tonnes to Eritrea.

In Khartoum, a dissemination seminar, organized by the ICRC and the Military Justice Branch of the Defence Ministry, was held for Sudanese officers from 1 to 15 February. Twenty-six officers took part in this seminar, the second of its kind; the first took place in 1984.

Chad

In Chad, the ICRC delegates again made visits to the detention centre at N'Djamena and continued negotiations to obtain access to the Libyan prisoners of war. On 10 January, one of these prisoners was registered in Fada.

From 8 to 11 January, a survey was made in Fada to ascertain the state of the wounded arriving from the north and to propose emergency medical assistance if required. The delegates found that the situation was under control and distributed 4,000 Swiss francs' worth of basic medical supplies. A second survey was carried out in Kouba Oulanga, Kalait and Fada at the end of January.

On 13 February another ICRC team went to the Nokou area, to the north of Lake Chad, where a Chad medical post has been set up in Maftus; they gave medicines and medical supplies to the dispensary there which provides first aid to the wounded evacuated from the Zouar area.

Uganda

A full visit to Luzira Prison near Kampala was completed on 8 January and a report delivered to the authorities. In the Luwero triangle, three children were reunited with their parents. Since the family reuniting programme was initiated in October 1986, 12 unaccompanied children have so far been reunited with their relatives. From 13 to 18 January, an ICRC nurse assessed the nutritional and medical needs of persons fleeing the Gulu area because of the fighting. While the food shortage did not appear to be too bad, the medical requirements were much more serious as there was no medical infrastructure of any kind in this zone. The ICRC nurse, however, was unable to travel around, for security reasons. A consignment of 310 kg of medicaments was nevertheless despatched from Kampala to Kitgum. Several relief missions were carried out in the north of Uganda: during January, 2 tonnes of blankets and clothing, 234 kg of kitchen utensils and 172 kg of soap were distributed to some 6,000 displaced persons in the Gulu area.

Several lectures on dissemination were given to members of the Uganda Red Cross Society, of the armed forces and of the general public.

Namibia/South West Africa

A further visit to Windhoek Prison was carried out on 26 and 27 January; it contained 13 sentenced security prisoners and 11 awaiting trial. In connection with the general situation in the country, ICRC Central Tracing Agency delegates collected 24 Red Cross messages written by detainees to their families; in addition, 59 messages were exchanged between civilians in Namibia and others in Angola.

About one hundred food parcels were distributed to the detainees' families, besides one tonne of foodstuffs in bulk.

Clinics and dispensaries caring for children suffering from malnutrition in the Owambo and Kavango regions were provided with cereals, powdered milk and oil.

Angola

In January, the ICRC supplied several groups of inhabitants of the Planalto with food because of the worsening food situation which had already been observed at the end of 1986. Conditions were particularly serious in and around Huambo; the ICRC and the Angolan Red Cross therefore opened a feeding centre for children suffering from malnutrition in this place. During January, the number of people to whom foodstuffs were distributed rose to 120,000 persons in the provinces of Huambo, Bié and Benguela. Relief supplies were also handed over to the National Society, to be distributed to hospitals, churches and missions.

On 9 January, a Portuguese national, captured by UNITA forces in 1986, was released and handed over to ICRC delegates, who took him to Pretoria, where he was received by the consular representatives of Portugal.

Latin America

Suriname

In January and February, several visits were carried out to Fort Zelandia Prison at Paramaribo. In addition, an ICRC delegate and a doctor were authorized by the Suriname Government to travel to

the eastern part of the country. They left on 28 December for the Moengo area (in the north-east), and then travelled by dug-out canoe up the River Maroni. The inhabitants with whom the delegates spoke said there was nothing they particularly needed.

Chile

Since 2 January, the ICRC has had access to all detention centres of the "Policía de Investigaciones", where security detainees are held.

El Salvador

On 29 January, 39 wounded guerrillas were evacuated by the ICRC by air to countries willing to accept them. On 2 February, an officer of the armed forces was released by the guerrillas at Perquin, while 57 persons held by the government were released in San Salvador. On 1 and 2 February, 19 war disabled were handed over to the ICRC, who escorted them to San Salvador, where they were placed under the protection of the Church. These three operations were performed under an agreement between the government and the opposition, under the auspices of the Church. In addition to those operations, the ICRC continued its periodical visits to security detainees held by the government, also its assistance programmes in aid of the civilian population in the conflict zones. In this connection, a project to distribute seed, fertilizers and insecticides was begun in February in three localities of the Morazan region.

Nicaragua

In January, the procedure concerning visits to detention centres run by the National Penitentiary System was reviewed in conjunction with the authorities, with a view to improving the work of protection in the prisons. Accordingly, in 1987 the ICRC is to visit the two main detention centres in Managua—Tipitapa and Zona Franca—five times, the six provincial penal centres four times, and the prison farms once. The visits began on 11 January at Tipitapa, where the ICRC delegates spoke, without witnesses, with 370 detainees. In addition, 600 detainees were seen in the centres at

Chinandega, Granada, Esteli, Juigalpa and Matagalpa. Assistance activities, including medical and relief work, were continued, mainly in the north and along the Atlantic coastal area.

Asia

Thailand

On 26 January, evacuation site No. 2, along the Khmer-Thai border, was shelled. Only a sparsely inhabited part of the site was hit, but eight persons were wounded and were transported to the Khao I Dang surgical hospital in ICRC ambulances. This incident once again showed that the evacuation sites should not be considered to be entirely safe zones, even though the Khmer-Thai border had gone through a period of calm during recent months.

Conflict in Afghanistan

Following an agreement concluded between the Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and the ICRC, the latter was allowed, at the end of January, to carry out protection and assistance activities in aid of the victims of the conflict in Afghanistan. The agreement provided that the ICRC would be able to visit all prisoners, in conformity with its usual criteria. The visits were expected to begin at the end of February at Kabul's Pul I Charki Prison.

In relation to assistance, an agreement was signed with the Afghan Red Crescent with a view to establishing an orthopaedic programme for war disabled. Work has already begun in Kabul, where three ICRC specialists will be in charge of the joint Red Crescent/ICRC project. Furthermore, a programme of surgical assistance to war casualties is expected to be set up, once the needs have been assessed by an ICRC doctor in co-operation with the Afghan Red Crescent. Lastly the ICRC is to set up a programme for disseminating knowledge of international humanitarian law and of Red Cross Principles, intended primarily for the armed forces and security services.

On the other side of the border, in Pakistan, the two ICRC hospitals at Peshawar and Quetta took in 143 and 112 wounded

respectively in January, and 176 and 67 wounded in February, as a result of the fighting which took place during that period in the neighbouring Afghan provinces.

East Timor

In January, the families of persons detained in connection with the incidents in East Timor and imprisoned in Djakarta were enabled to visit their relatives after they had been separated for over two years. This operation was organized and financed by the ICRC.

On 6 and 7 February, the tenth repatriation operation of former Portuguese officials in East Timor was carried out: 3 former officials and their dependents (30 persons in all) were flown to Lisbon. Since January 1986, ten such operations have taken 266 persons back to Portugal. Between 10 and 18 February, a new mission was carried out to assess the situation of the displaced persons who had been first sent to Atauro and then taken back to the main island of East Timor. The ICRC delegates saw 1350 people in the districts of Los Palos and Baucau; they also investigated the situation of 650 other persons whom had brought there in November 1986 from Calaico by the ICRC.

Burma

On 21 February, an agreement involving a new project in aid of disabled soldiers in the Mingoladon Orthopaedic Centre at Rangoon was signed with the appropriate Burmese authorities. It was also agreed that the ICRC was to continue its orthopaedic programme for civilians.

Philippines

In January, a follow-up visit was carried out by an ICRC doctor to Aparri and Tuguegarao Prisons in Cagayan province, where a food aid operation for the detainees had been undertaken. A further mission was carried out to Iloilo Prison on Panay Island to disinfect the prison and treat detainees suffering from scabies. In addition, 70 detainees were seen in 11 places of detention—both

civilian and military—on Cebu Island, and in Negros Oriental, Bohol and Leyte.

On Mindanao Island, the ICRC delegation pursued its assistance activities for displaced persons, in close co-operation with the National Society.

A number of assessments were made at several places on the island and were followed by general distributions of rice and oil: a total of 7,000 persons received 34 tonnes of foodstuffs, while in certain mountainous areas, 220 blankets were distributed.

Middle East

Lebanon

In January and February, fighting continued to take place around the Palestinian camps on the outskirts of Beirut, at Chatila and Bourj-el-Brajneh, and at Rachidieh near Tyre. There was fierce street fighting in West Beirut between rival militias from 16 to 20 February. The ICRC was regularly in touch with the parties to the conflict, to remind them that it was ready to bring assistance to the victims. Despite its approaches and two public appeals, the ICRC delegates did not obtain access to the camps. On the other hand, the Lebanese Red Cross managed, on two occasions in January, to evacuate 47 persons (women, children and wounded people) from Rachidieh camp. One Lebanese Red Cross first-aid worker was killed and two others were wounded when their ambulance was caught in the combatants' fire. They were part of a unit that had just taken a casualty to a hospital. Between 16 and 20 February, although street fighting in the capital made it particularly difficult to evacuate the wounded, the Lebanese Red Cross workers were able to transfer 280 persons, 145 of whom were wounded or sick, and to treat on the spot 120 minor casualties.

During that same period, an emergency first-aid post was set up by the ICRC medical team in the delegation shelter; several dozen slightly injured persons were treated here. A number of assessments were also carried out by the ICRC teams in those medical centres and hospitals which they could reach, and medical materials and medicines to a value of 234,000 Swiss francs were distributed.

In January and February, over 2,000 family parcels and 12,000 blankets were distributed to persons whose homes had been des-

troyed. During the same period, about 4,000 Red Cross messages were transmitted by the ICRC in Lebanon.

Iran/Iraq conflict

Following the shelling of civilian objectives, by both Iraq and Iran, the ICRC appealed to the two parties to the conflict to cease these violations of international humanitarian law. On 11 February, a solemn appeal was handed to the two parties, and the ICRC asked the Member States of the United Nations Security Council to express their support for this appeal.

In Iraq, the ICRC delegates visited in January 7,114 prisoners of war in six camps. In February, four camps and 5,645 prisoners of war were visited.

In Iran in January, the delegates visited 4,682 Iraqi prisoners of war in three camps, and the following month they began their sixth camp visit following resumption of the ICRC's protection activities in Iran in December 1986. During that period, 358,247 Red Cross messages were exchanged between the prisoners of war and their families.