

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

November-December 1986

Africa

Ethiopia

According to the final surveys there was a definite improvement in the nutritional status of the population in practically all the assisted areas, except for a few pockets in the provinces of Eritrea, Hararghe and Gondar.

The ICRC agronomist completed his assessment of the 1986 harvests, which yielded good overall results, particularly in Tigray. The 4,112 tonnes of seed that the ICRC had distributed through 1986 to some 221,000 families had produced about 115,000 tonnes of food. However, the situation cannot yet be considered stable; the ICRC is planning to distribute seed through 1987 to consolidate these results.

Mozambique

A number of foreigners held by the RENAMO (Mozambique national resistance movement) in Mozambique were released at the Malawi border and then repatriated, under the auspices of the ICRC.

The first group of 57 people, including 43 Portuguese, 10 Pakistanis, 2 Cape Verdeans and 2 Mauritians, were released and handed over to an ICRC delegate at the border on 17 December. The second group, composed of 1 British citizen, 4 Portuguese and 1 German and his family, were released on 22 December at another point on the border, also in the presence of an ICRC delegate. All these people were subsequently repatriated or travelled on to a country of their choice.

Angola

The month of November marks the beginning of the so-called "bad" season between harvests, and in November 1986 ICRC delegates once again noted an increase in the degree of malnutrition in several areas of Huambo Province, on the Planalto, also a sharp rise in the number of families recently displaced on account of the conflict. The ICRC delegation immediately opened two new feeding centres and stepped up food distributions.

Latin America

Suriname

In view of recent events in Suriname, and following discussions with the Suriname authorities and the National Society in early October, the ICRC regional delegate, based in Bogota, returned to Paramaribo in mid-November to make an offer of services to the authorities: the ICRC was prepared to visit persons arrested in connection with the events and provide any assistance needed by the civilian population in the areas most affected, following an assessment of their requirements. The regional delegate was subsequently joined by another delegate and a doctor sent out from Geneva on 8 December.

In November and December, respectively, the ICRC delegates visited 98 and 109 detainees held in Paramaribo's Fort Zelandia Prison. The authorities released half the detainees on 24 December and the ICRC gave them financial assistance for their journeys home.

The delegates were authorized to travel to the east of the country at the end of December. Their assessment of the situation showed that no action by the ICRC was necessary, for the time being.

Chile

ICRC delegates continued regular visits to security detainees held in prisons under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and in places of detention run by the "Central Nacional de Informaciones" (CNI). (The ICRC regularly receives lists of people arrested by the CNI.) The delegates also visited persons detained by the "carabineros" and the "Policía de Investigaciones".

Paraguay

In Asunción, in early December, ICRC delegates visited security detainees—ten in all—held in four places of detention, two of which were under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and two under the control of the Ministry of the Interior.

Peru

People detained under Decree 046 received regular visits from the ICRC at the detention centres run by the Ministry of Justice and those under the control of the “Policía de Investigaciones del Perú”.

El Salvador

The ICRC delegates made their regular visits to security detainees held by the Government—including a one-week visit to the main penitentiary in San Salvador. On 28 December, they visited for the second time an officer held by the opposition for over a year. The ICRC also continued its programmes (food aid, medical care, sanitation, etc.) in aid of the civilian population affected by the conflict. In November, ICRC staff began giving lectures to members of the national police force taking part in a series of seminars on international humanitarian law and human rights.

Nicaragua

The ICRC was involved mainly in assisting detainees and their families and providing relief to the civilian population affected by the conflict. A major operation was carried out in the Rio Coco area in the north-east of the country, where the delegates distributed nearly 104 tonnes of relief supplies, including 89 tonnes of food, to 3,353 persons in November and 6,235 in December. The ICRC nurse gave the first of a series of lectures to some 20 public health officials in the same area.

Asia

Indonesia

From 3 to 19 November, the ICRC carried out the third series of visits made in 1986 to persons detained in connection with events in East Timor. Delegates saw 245 detainees in four places of detention in Dili and Djakarta.

From 14 November to 6 December, in co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross, the ICRC helped some 900 displaced people on the main island of East Timor to return to their home villages, where food was distributed to them on arrival.

Philippines

As from 7 November, the ICRC resumed its visits to prisons in the provinces, administered by the Ministry of Local Governments; delegates saw 64 persons arrested in connection with incidents connected with the insurrection and held in 9 places of detention in regions 1 (Northern Luzon), 2 (Cagayan) and 6 (Panay and Negros Occidental). Visits will continue through 1987.

Kampuchea

On two occasions, on 13 November and 5 December, women who had been left alone in Kampuchea were reunited with relatives in France.

China

The ICRC Delegate General for Asia was in Beijing from 19 November to 3 December for discussions with the Chinese authorities and the Chinese Red Cross regarding the feasibility of ICRC action and co-operation in various fields.

In early December, the ICRC visited 14 Vietnamese soldiers captured by the Chinese and held in the provinces of Guangxi and Yunnan.

Nepal

The first national seminar on international humanitarian law was held from 1 to 4 December in Katmandu. The seminar was jointly organized by the Nepal Red Cross, the Ministry of Justice, the University and the ICRC, and attended by about thirty participants.

Sri Lanka

Two one-week introductory courses on international humanitarian law were held in Colombo in November for members of the Sri Lankan armed forces and the national police. The courses were organized by the ICRC, in co-operation with the "Sri Lanka Foundation" and the Ministry of Defence.

Middle East

Iran/Iraq conflict

On 3 December, following negotiations with the Iranian authorities, the ICRC was able to resume its visits to Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran, starting with the 1,871 prisoners held in Sari Camp. It continued on 22 December with a visit to the 1,771 POWs interned at Bojnurd Camp. The ICRC was able to register 378 new prisoners in these two camps.

In Iraq, the ICRC continued its regular visits to approximately 12,000 Iranian prisoners of war: a new series of complete visits began on 10 November in 9 camps and 4 military hospitals. From 16 to 18 December, ICRC delegates saw the Iranian Kurdish refugees in Al Tash Camp, which they had last visited in September. In November and December, the ICRC maintained the exchange of family messages between Iranian prisoners of war and their families, and between Iraqi POWs and their families.

Lebanon

In November and December, while heavy fighting went on around the Palestinian camps, ICRC delegates continued checking the level of stocks in the hospitals and dispensaries and provided them with the medical supplies and the medicines they needed. They also gave over 1,000 blankets and kitchen sets to civilians who had been driven from their homes by the fighting. The ICRC maintained regular contact with the various parties to the conflict, reminding them that the ICRC was always available to assist the victims. Despite its efforts, however, the ICRC did not gain access to the Palestinian refugee camps at Rachidieh, Bourj-el-Brajneh and Chatila, or to the village of Maghdouché.

In December, the ICRC delegation was increased by one delegate and a nurse.

Western Sahara conflict

From 5 to 8 December, an ICRC delegate and a doctor visited 35 Moroccan prisoners held in Algeria. The prisoners filled in messages which the ICRC transmitted to their families.

Jordan

An annual series of complete visits was carried out from 27 October to 18 December in 26 places of detention administered by the Prison Service, the Security Services and the Ministry of Defence. The delegates saw 3,448 detainees, 291 of whom were of particular concern to the ICRC.

Europe**United Kingdom**

The reports drawn up at the end of the series of visits carried out in 1986 to detainees held in Northern Ireland were transmitted to the British authorities at the end of November. The ICRC Delegate General for Europe and North America and the ICRC Chief Medical Officer then went to London on 11 December to discuss the reports with the Northern Ireland Office.

In 1986, from 26 August to 5 September, the ICRC visited some 1,600 detainees held in the Maze, Magilligan, Belfast and Maghera Prisons.
