

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES
September-October 1987

Africa

Angola

The seed distribution programme (mainly maize, sorghum and soya beans) had started off well in September, the plan being to assist some 100,000 displaced civilians in the provinces of Huambo and Bié, but the work was interrupted by a tragic plane crash on 14 October. The aircraft was a Hercules transport plane chartered by the ICRC in Switzerland, and it crashed soon after take-off, about 40 km from Kuito. There were no survivors among the four crew members—two Irish, Dorian Shone, the Captain, and Kevin Tocknell; one British, Nicholas Duff; and one New Zealander, Gary Heap—or among the passengers—one Angolan, Nuno Ferreira, and the Swiss secretary of the ICRC delegation in Kuito, Miss Catherine Chappuis.

A commission of inquiry, composed of representatives of the Angolan and Swiss authorities and experts from the charter company that had leased the plane, was set up to try and determine the cause of the disaster.

Since the crash, ICRC activities in the *municipios* on the Planalto have been suspended pending the outcome of the inquiry. The first part of the ICRC's seed distribution programme had been completed before the tragedy and the maize will be planted in time.

South Africa

Every year since 1969, the ICRC has been carrying out annual series of visits to sentenced security prisoners and to persons held in

preventive detention under Section 28 of the 1982 Internal Security Act, the only two categories of detainees whom the South African authorities have hitherto allowed the ICRC to visit.

This year the ICRC expressed the wish to visit all detainees sentenced for security reasons, including those sentenced for public order violations in connection with the internal disturbances. Unfortunately the ICRC delegation in Pretoria has still not received confirmation of the authorities' agreement, and it cannot therefore organize a new annual series of visits for the time being.

The delegation has continued providing assistance to Mozambican refugees in Gazankulu and KaNgwane. It is also working in close cooperation with the South African Red Cross on the programmes on behalf of the black communities; community organizers have been appointed there to carry out dissemination work, to develop humanitarian activities and to create local sections of the South African Red Cross.

After the floods struck Natal Province in September, the Natal Section of the South African Red Cross was extremely active. The community organizers proved invaluable, and during the first few days following the disaster the emergency stocks built up by the ICRC in Durban last June were used to meet the most urgent needs.

Mozambique

In cooperation with the National Society, the ICRC delegation continued developing its assistance programme for displaced civilians. The ICRC's operational centre for these activities is now in Beira (Sofala Province), with 17 expatriates (delegates, medical and technical staff—including four pilots) deployed there at the end of October. Nine ICRC staff remained based in Maputo, one delegate was sent out to Nampula and four others to Quelimane.

In October the arrival of a third DC-3 aircraft enabled the ICRC to step up the rhythm of its air operations. Relief distributions increased accordingly. The delegation expected the volume of assistance over the last months of the year to come to some 200 to 300 tonnes of relief distributed each month in Sofala Province and some 300 to 400 tonnes in Manica Province.

Surveys of needs were also scheduled to continue in the provinces of Inhambane and Nampula.

Ethiopia

At the end of October ICRC headquarters, in close consultation with the heads of delegation in Ethiopia and Sudan, defined a new strategy to assist the civilian population in northern and western Ethiopia as rapidly and as extensively as possible. The area is again on the brink of famine, only two years after disaster struck in 1984-85. On 12 November the President of the ICRC launched an appeal for "open roads for survival", alerting the international community to the urgency of the situation and the need to use the roads to reach the worst affected areas.

Uganda

The ICRC delegation in Kampala continued its visits to Ugandan places of detention, both in the capital (Luzira Remand, Luzira Upper penitentiary and the central police station), and in the provinces (Moroto and Kotido in Karamoja Province, Mbale).

The ICRC continued providing medical assistance and improved sanitary facilities for persons detained in the above prisons, and to Jinja Kirinya Prison.

In the north-east of the country, the ICRC completed its non-food relief programme for 4,000 families who had suffered cattle raids and looting in the Sebei area.

A similar small-scale operation was undertaken north of the town of Mbale for some 2,200 recently displaced families.

Chad

The ICRC's efforts to carry out its protection and assistance activities under the Geneva Conventions have not always been successful. None of the parties to the conflict between Chad and Libya has as yet informed the ICRC when it would be able to visit prisoners of war captured by the Chadian national armed forces or detained in Libya.

Asia

Sri Lanka

Following the agreement signed on 29 July between Sri Lankan President Jayawardene and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, designed to bring an end to the Sri Lankan conflict, the ICRC and the League jointly approached the Sri Lankan authorities on 18 September for permission to make an on-site assessment of needs in view of launching a co-ordinated Red Cross operation.

The ICRC also proposed, on 16 October, that a mission be authorized to travel rapidly to the northern and eastern provinces of the country, where the situation was deteriorating, to provide necessary medical care and food supplies to the affected population.

Following the Sri Lankan Government's assent to the first request, a joint mission comprising the ICRC Director of Operations, Mr. Pasquier, and the Secretary General of the League, Mr. Bucher, travelled to Colombo on 25 October. Ensuing discussions with the authorities enabled the ICRC to define its proposed operation in the northern and eastern parts of the country.

Conflict in Afghanistan

● *Afghanistan*: Pursuant to the agreement signed in August between the ICRC and the Afghan Red Crescent concerning a medical assistance programme for the latter's dispensaries, two ICRC nurses have been in Kabul since October.

At mid-October, visits to detainees at Pul-I-Charki prison in Kabul had not yet been resumed. Negotiations with the authorities are being pursued in an attempt to settle this matter.

● *Pakistan*: The ICRC surgical hospitals at Peshawar and Quetta have been the focus of intense activity: a total of 585 operations were performed in September and 572 in October. The seven first-aid posts along the border have continued to take in the wounded and evacuate them to the ICRC hospitals.

ICRC delegates have maintained continuous contact with representatives of the Afghan opposition movements in view of ob-

taining access to prisoners the movements might hold. No visits could take place in September or October.

Kampuchean conflict

The ICRC, still deeply concerned over the fate of displaced civilians on the Khmer-Thai border, spoke at the donors' meeting in New York on 10 September about its goals and the difficulties it faced, underscoring the responsibility of the parties concerned, including the international community as a whole. It repeated the solutions advocated for the most urgent problems, particularly the reorganization of the Site 2 camp into smaller and therefore more manageable units and greater access by ICRC delegates to all the border camps.

The ICRC delegate-general for Asia held discussions with the Thai authorities in Bangkok and New York concerning these questions and the problem of ICRC access to all the persons captured in connection with the conflict. A fourth situation report dealing with the various aspects of protection on the Thai border from May to August 1987 was simultaneously presented to the authorities.

Viet Nam

On 10 September, ten Chinese prisoners detained in Viet Nam were visited by ICRC delegates in accordance with the institution's customary procedure.

Philippines

In the Philippines, the ICRC pursued its programmes in its three main fields of activity:

- Visits to prisoners arrested in connection with insurgency-related incidents: 64 detainees were visited in October and provided with relief supplies (hygiene requisites and recreational items).
- General distributions to persons displaced or stranded as a result of insurgency-related incidents and needing assistance: relief supplies (oil, soap, blankets) were received by about 5,000 beneficiaries a month. During the distributions free medical consultations were also given and studies made of the health and nutritional state of the children.

- Dissemination of the Red Cross principles and international humanitarian law: the fourth phase of the Red Cross comic strip dissemination project, begun in 1984, was completed in September in the 30 remaining provinces. The Red Cross message has thus been broadly disseminated in the Filipino school system in the hope of reaching the entire population through teachers, students and their families.

Europe

Federal Republic of Germany

The President of the ICRC, Mr. C. Sommaruga, was in the Federal Republic of Germany from 15 to 18 September, at the invitation of the Federal Government and the National Society.

After visiting the International Tracing Service in Arolsen (an institution that has been under the responsibility of the ICRC since 1955), Mr. Sommaruga had several talks in Bonn with senior government representatives, including the President of the Federal Republic, Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dietrich Genscher. The ICRC President expressed the institution's gratitude for the support received from the Federal Republic. He also broached the question of the Additional Protocols to which the Federal Republic of Germany is not yet party.

Mr. Sommaruga also had several working meetings with senior members of the National Society, including its President.

Spain

ICRC representatives went on two missions to Madrid, one in September and the other in October, to discuss with the Spanish authorities the continuation of visits to persons detained under antiterrorist laws, and in particular the extension of such visits to detainees under interrogation. During the discussions, the authorities confirmed their agreement in principle regarding ICRC access to detainees under interrogation. The ICRC representatives reminded the authorities of the institution's customary procedures

regarding visits to detainees; those procedures were accepted and a system of notification of arrests was worked out.

The two missions also provided an opportunity to establish closer links with the Spanish Red Cross.

Latin America

Guatemala

The delegate-general for Latin America was on mission in Guatemala from 27 October to 1 November to negotiate with the authorities the launching of ICRC activities on behalf of the victims of the conflict situation. He had talks with President Cerezo, with the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Army Chief of Staff. The ICRC's proposals for action, which included assistance to the civilian population (displaced persons), visits to detainees, the dissemination of international humanitarian law and support for National Society activities, were well received.

El Salvador

In conformity with its mandate as a neutral intermediary and at the request of the parties concerned, the ICRC accompanied the representatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front/Democratic Revolutionary Front after their return to El Salvador to take part in the third meeting between the Government and the opposition from 4 to 6 October; the ICRC had done the same when the previous meetings were held in 1984. The ICRC received active support from the Salvadorean Red Cross, which mobilized considerable first-aid facilities.

The ICRC has also been concerned with the situation of the 4,300 Salvadorean refugees who returned from Honduras in October; after assessing their requirements, in cooperation with the organizations handling the refugees' resettlement, the ICRC set up a programme of medical consultations, safe water supply and latrine construction in one of the five resettlement sites. These activities are all part of ICRC assistance to the civilian population (resident and displaced) suffering from the conflict situation.

During the period under review, food aid, medical and public health programmes for the civilian population in need and visits to detainees (provisional detention centres of the armed forces and security corps, prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Justice) continued as before.

Suriname

The authorities of Suriname responded favourably to the ICRC's proposal to open a delegation in Paramaribo. The new delegation's main tasks will include visiting detainees and monitoring the situation of the civilian population in conflict areas. Soon after the authorities granted their permission, an ICRC delegate was sent to Suriname in early November.

During a mission in September, two ICRC delegates once again visited detainees in Fort-Zelandia Prison in the capital.

Peru

The ICRC has been visiting security detainees in prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and in several police interrogation centres in Lima and the provinces, within the limits imposed since early 1987, i.e. without being able to enter the emergency area of Ayacucho. The institution has been pursuing its efforts at the highest level in order to obtain permission to visit all persons detained for security reasons.

The ICRC has also been continuing its medical and food aid programmes for detainees.

In September, the ICRC and the Peruvian Red Cross assisted 35 families recently displaced by the events and now living in Abancay, chief town of the Apurímac Department. They also opened a refectory in Abancay for 200 schoolchildren separated from their families.

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In *Chile*, visits to security detainees continued both in the prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and in the security corps centres.

In *Nicaragua*, visits were made to six prisons in the provinces and to the Zona Franca prison in Managua. The ICRC also continued assisting detainees and their families.

The sub-delegations of Puerto Cabezas and Bluefields on the Atlantic coast carried out several medico-nutritional evaluations among the civilian population affected by the conflict. The delegates distributed food, mosquito nets, clothing, blankets and kitchen utensils to people in need.

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The regional delegations in Buenos Aires, Bogotá and San José (Costa Rica) made several missions to maintain contacts with the authorities and/or the National Societies of the following countries: Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica (introductory seminar on international humanitarian law and the Red Cross, for National Society staff and government representatives) and Paraguay (where the ICRC delegates also visited two detainees).

Middle East/North Africa

Iran/Iraq conflict

On 1 October, representatives of the Iranian authorities handed over 101 disabled, sick and elderly Iraqi prisoners of war to the ICRC in Tehran for repatriation to Iraq. The prisoners, accompanied by two doctors, two nurses and two ICRC delegates, left for Baghdad on board an aircraft chartered by the ICRC. There they were handed over to the authorities of the Republic of Iraq. Prior to this operation, each of the Iraqi prisoners had been visited by ICRC delegates and doctors and had been able to speak to them without witnesses. The ICRC took part in this repatriation operation as a neutral intermediary.

Throughout the two months under review, ICRC delegates continued visiting prisoner-of-war camps in both Iran and Iraq. In Iran, the team of delegates continued the series of visits it had begun in December 1986 and went to the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth Iraqi prisoner-of-war camps. In Iraq, in September, two teams of delegates completed their fifth series of visits to ten camps

holding Iranian prisoners of war, and in mid-October they began the sixth series.

Persian Gulf

On 21 September, the American naval forces in the Persian Gulf captured 29 Iranian seamen, including 8 wounded, and recovered the bodies of 3 others. The United States immediately stated that they did not intend to hold the survivors prisoner. At the Omani Government's request, and after contacting the Iranian, Omani and American authorities, the ICRC dispatched a delegate to Oman to supervise the handover of the 26 seamen and the 3 bodies by American representatives to the Omani authorities at Muscat airport on 26 September. The Omani authorities then handed the seamen on to Iranian representatives. Subsequently the ICRC sent the American authorities a note verbale pointing out that such situations and their consequences fell within the scope of the Geneva Conventions. On 17 October a similar operation took place at Muscat airport, where four wounded Iranian seamen and the bodies of two others were handed over to Iranian representatives. The seamen had been captured by the American naval forces on 8 October. The day before the handover, the four wounded Iranians had been visited on board an American ship by an ICRC delegate and a doctor.

Arabian Peninsula

With a view to strengthening links with the authorities and the National Societies of the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, the ICRC Deputy Director of Operations, Mr. Michel Convers, went on a mission to Kuwait and Bahrain, where he stayed from 11 to 24 September. During his meetings Mr. Convers discussed the obligations incumbent upon States party to the Geneva Conventions, the ICRC's role in situations of international conflict, and the measures to be taken in peacetime, particularly with regard to the dissemination of international humanitarian law. Mr. Convers then went on to Saudi Arabia, where he had extensive discussions with the Secretary General of the Arab Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Lebanon

There was a further deterioration in the economic situation in September and October on account of the devaluation in the Lebanese pound, and this caused shortages and strikes. Moreover, numerous violent incidents occurred throughout the country during that period. The ICRC continued its customary activities, which focus on providing assistance to the local population. In accordance with its mandate, the ICRC is concerned with the fate of civilians directly affected by the fighting, in particular people living in the villages situated on the edge of the "security zone" in the south of the country. Jointly with the Lebanese Red Cross, the ICRC brought medical assistance to this area; the mobile clinics of the Lebanese Red Cross, working with the ICRC, held consultations for the inhabitants of twelve villages, most of which are situated along the demarcation line, and none of which have medical facilities of their own. Because of fighting in the area, however, some of the villages could not be reached regularly by the mobile clinics. Material aid was distributed to people most seriously affected by the conflict and the economic situation. The ICRC thus provided relief supplies throughout Lebanon to some 6,500 people in September, and to 2,500 in October.

During the two months under review, the ICRC continued visiting Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon (Rashidiyeh) and in Beirut (Chatila and Burj-al-Brajneh) to provide medical assistance and do Tracing Agency work.

ICRC delegates also continued visiting people detained by the various parties to the conflict: the delegates saw 31 persons in September and 33 in October. Despite the efforts made to this end, the ICRC was unable to gain access to all detainees; in particular it was not authorized to visit persons detained in the "security zone", including those held in Khiyam Prison. Some of the detainees held in Khiyam were able to send Red Cross messages to their families residing outside the zone. On the other hand the ICRC was granted access to persons captured in Lebanon and detained in Israel contrary to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention; there were 44 such detainees at the end of October.

The ICRC President met the President of Lebanon in Geneva on 3 October and ICRC delegates again saw President Gemayel in Beirut at the end of the month. ICRC representatives also met the acting Prime Minister, Mr. Hoss, on 28 October.

The ICRC regrets to report the death on 18 October of a Swiss

nurse, Miss Pernette Zehnder, who was killed in a car accident soon after being assigned to the ICRC delegation in Lebanon.

Israel and the Occupied Territories

ICRC delegates accompanied by a doctor continued the annual complete series of visits to the prisons, which they had begun in August. The delegates also went on with their customary protection and assistance work on behalf of protected persons, in conformity with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relating to the protection of the civilian population.

Tunisia

The ICRC has opened a regional delegation in Tunis covering Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, and activities relating to the Western Sahara conflict.

The regional delegate took up his duties on 4 October, after the Tunisian authorities had agreed to the opening of a regional delegation in their country.
