

**INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE ACTION
IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA**

In 1963, the ICRC undertook a large-scale assistance action in the Yemen where fighting was taking place between Royalists and forces of the Arab Republic of the Yemen. As the conflict was prolonged, involving a considerable number of civilian and military casualties, it set up a field hospital at Uqhd in the northern part of the country; it also increased the number of its medical teams working in the interior. In addition, delegates visited prisoners of both sides, brought them relief and arranged for them to communicate with their families.

This action, continued in the mountains of the interior as well as at Sanaa and for which the ICRC was able to count on the active support of various National Societies¹, has in fact known no respite until now. The Uqhd hospital ceased functioning in 1965, but new tasks gave scope for initiative. Since a disturbing medical situation persisted in the North, the ICRC again sent out medical teams to that country. Red Cross interventions increased still further in the Arabian Peninsula when, in Aden in 1967 and in view of the recrudescence of disturbances on the eve of the territory's becoming independent, the ICRC sent delegates and subsequently doctors in order to deal with the serious lack of medical care.

The general situation in the Arabian peninsula, particularly in Yemen and Aden, compelled the ICRC to continue its medical aid, relief work and assistance to detainees.

¹ See, in particular, *International Review*, December 1963 and January 1964.

Sanaa.—The ICRC recently sent seven tons of powdered milk and two tons of cheese to Sanaa, by a Norwegian DC-6 B aircraft which it had chartered. This plane left Geneva on 11th November, called at Cairo and arrived in Sanaa on 12th November, where the ICRC delegates took delivery.

These supplies will be distributed during the winter to orphans, children in hospital, the maternity hospital and tuberculosis patients. There are at present two ICRC delegates in Sanaa organizing this relief work and supervising distribution. The Yemeni authorities have welcomed the resumption of this operation at the approach of winter.

In addition, in response to a request from the government of the Yemen Arab Republic, the ICRC has for the last few months been endeavouring to obtain technical assistance for the fitting of artificial limbs to the war-disabled. It has approached several National Societies for two orthopaedic technicians and the equipment necessary to set up an artificial limb workshop for the fitting, as a start, of 100 to 150 known disabled in Sanaa.

Unfortunately, the ICRC has not so far been successful in this quest, but hopes soon to be.

Last October, in agreement with the Yemeni authorities, the ICRC delegation arranged the evacuation of the last remaining group of women and children of the former Yemeni reigning family. These women and children, who had been living in Sanaa and Taiz, separated from the rest of their family, since the beginning of the conflict, were thus able, thanks to the ICRC, to join their family. A plane was specially chartered for the operation.

North Yemen.—The ICRC medical mission in the North of the country is being carried on by a team at a field station near the fighting zone, where it tends the wounded and sick victims of the conflict. The team consists of a delegate, a surgeon and four male nurses, all of whom were recruited in Switzerland. Under trying conditions, with scant surgical equipment and medical supplies, the team provides the wounded and sick with the attention they require, and even takes some in-patients for treatment. There being no medical service in the region, the wounded and sick would receive no medical attention at all, were it not for the ICRC team.

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Aden.—In Aden too, the ICRC is continuing the medical assistance it started a year ago. Almost unaided, its surgical team runs the operating theatres at the Al Gamhurian (formerly the Queen Elizabeth) hospital, the only civilian hospital still available to about 1.5 million inhabitants. All other hospitals had to close for lack of staff.

The surgical team comprises two surgeons and an anaesthetist who were recruited by the Rumanian Red Cross for the ICRC. It took over at the end of October from two surgeons recruited by the Bulgarian Red Cross. Both teams of eminent surgeons had each in turn already completed a three month mission at the Aden hospital at the beginning of the year, have performed a considerable number of operations and developed the tracking and treatment of serious illnesses.

In addition, the ICRC is supplying the Aden hospital with essential equipment and supplies not locally available.

The ICRC delegation has also been authorized to resume its assistance to persons detained in connection with the political and military situation in the People's Republic of South Yemen. Thanks to the facilities granted, the head of the ICRC delegation in the Arabian Peninsula, and his two assistants, have been able to investigate detention conditions for some 200 inmates of the Mansoura prison.