

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Middle East**

Reuniting of families.—In spite of increased tension in the Middle East, the International Committee of the Red Cross has managed, through its delegations in Cairo and Tel Aviv, to get 143 persons across the Suez canal. This “reuniting of families” operation took place on December 30 at el Qantara.

Sixty-six persons (53 men, 5 women and 8 children) were thus able to go from the United Arab Republic to Sinai territory to rejoin their families in Gaza, Khan Younis and Raffah on the coast.

In addition, 77 nationals of the United Arab Republic (7 men, 20 women and 50 children) held for several months in territory under Israeli control have rejoined their families in the Nile valley.

The operation was carried out by delegates Marcel Boisard, Jean Eggimann, Pierre Jossieron and Walter Wenger.

Repatriation of children.—The ICRC delegation in Israel received permission to repatriate to the Gaza area a certain number of children separated from their families, having taken refuge in Amman since June 1967.

This repatriation operation, the second such convoy which the ICRC has undertaken, took place in January 1969.

Destruction in occupied territories.—The demolition of a considerable number of houses having again occurred in territory occupied by Israel during the past few months, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross has expressed his acute concern to the Israeli authorities over these demolitions which are contrary to articles 33 and 53 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. He drew their attention to the particularly difficult situation in which these families found themselves, deprived over-night of a dwelling-place.

Application of the Fourth Geneva Convention.—Following on persistent ICRC representations to the Israeli authorities stating that the Fourth Convention is applicable throughout all the occupied territories, the Government of Israel has declared that it wished “to leave open for the time being” the question of the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention, preferring to act on an *ad hoc* basis by granting practical facilities to the ICRC delegates.

On the other hand, during the course of various discussions which delegates of the ICRC in the Middle East have had with elements of the Palestinian resistance, they clearly drew their attention to respect of the essential humanitarian rules which also applied to acts of resistance, especially as regards respect for the civilian population.

Relief action in Syria.—On 17 and 24 January 1969 the International Committee sent relief consignments by air from Geneva to Damascus.

These two flights took 22 tons of milk and cheese for persons displaced from their homes on the Golan Plateau during the Israelo-Arab conflict, and whose plight, with the approach of the coldest part of the winter, is causing concern.

Other supplies of food and blankets have been sent to the Syrian Red Cross by the ICRC and National Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun Societies.

Tanzania

Whilst in Dar es Salaam, Mr. Georg Hoffmann, ICRC delegate general for Africa, had discussions with the leader of the Frelimo movement, Mr. Eduardo Mondlane, with a view to obtaining permission to visit the Portuguese nationals which the movement is said to be holding prisoner.

The ICRC representative has not so far managed to obtain permission from the Tanzanian authorities to visit these prisoners.

Senegal

On 19 December 1968 Mr. Amilcar Cabral, head of the Paigc movement, had a discussion with Mr. Georg Hoffmann, ICRC



Yemen: Arrival of ICRC aircraft at Sanaa

Moçambique: The ICRC delegate, accompanied by the Lourenço Marques Red Cross President, at the Mabalane labour camp.



delegate general for Africa, before releasing through the intermediary of the Senegalese Red Cross three Portuguese prisoners who were thus able to return to their own country. They were accompanied by a Senegalese Red Cross welfare worker and were met whilst in transit through Geneva airport by an ICRC representative. The Portuguese Red Cross organized the reception of these prisoners in Lisbon.

Moçambique

The Portuguese authorities gave the International Committee permission to visit, in November 1968, detention centres in Moçambique in which are held persons arrested for their participation in events.

Mr. André Tschiffeli, assistant delegate general for Africa, went to six camps and prisons and interviewed detainees without witnesses.¹

The Moçambique authorities and Red Cross granted him every facility to carry out his mission. As usual, the ICRC will send a report on these visits to the Detaining Power.

South Africa

Mr. Georg Hoffmann, ICRC delegate general for Africa, was in South Africa in December 1968 to have discussions with the government authorities and the Prime Minister. The ICRC wishes to repeat its series of visits to detention centres, the last of which took place in the autumn of 1967.

Botswana, Lesotho, Ngwane

The delegate general also visited the Red Cross and government authorities of the recently independent States of Botswana, Lesotho and Ngwane. One of the subjects he discussed in the three capitals, Gaborone, Maseru and Mbabane, with the leaders of the Red Cross was the requirements for recognition of the Society by the ICRC.

¹ *Plate.* — The ICRC delegate, accompanied by the Lourenço Marques Red Cross President, Dr Paiz, at the Malabane labour camp.

Hong Kong

In December, Mr. Hans Hefti, honorary ICRC delegate, visited two prisons in which were held persons arrested for their participation in the events on this territory in 1967.

As during his visits in April and in May 1968, the delegate interviewed prisoners of his own choosing. His reports were subsequently conveyed to the detaining authorities.

Yemen

A DC6 aircraft, chartered by the International Committee, left Geneva on January 21, 1969, for Sanaa, capital of the Yemen Republic, with a load of 10 tons of milk and cheese for the continuation of the ICRC relief action on behalf of the children in the capital, as well as with 24 cases of medicines, donated by the Bulgarian Red Cross, intended for the hospitals in Sanaa.¹

IN GENEVA

PRESIDENCY OF THE ICRC

Mr. Marcel A. NAVILLE, recently appointed President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, will assume office on 1st July 1969.

In the meantime, Mr. Jacques FREYMOND, Vice-President, will discharge the presidential functions.

¹ *Plate.* — ICRC aircraft at Sanaa airport.