

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Middle East**

**Reuniting of Families.** — Under the aegis of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the fifth operation for the reuniting of families took place in the region of the Golan Plateau at the beginning of May. This activity involves, with the agreement of the Israeli government, the repatriation of Arabs displaced by the war of June 1967 and part of whose families had remained in the Israeli-occupied zone. Thanks to the action of the ICRC, 367 people have been able to return to their families.

A similar operation is being carried out in Sinai, where repatriation is a two-way traffic. Egyptians in the Israeli-occupied zone may join their families in the United Arab Republic, and Palestinians who fled to Egypt are able to return to theirs in Gaza. In the latest of these operations, on 29 April, 81 Palestinians and 57 Egyptians were repatriated.

**Visits to Prisoners.** — The International Committee has undertaken its third series of visits to Arab detainees in Israel and Israeli-occupied territory. These visits are carried out by teams of two or three delegates, one of whom is a doctor.

The ICRC has been authorized to visit and talk in private with some 2,000 Arab detainees. Delegates may go regularly to prisons in Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem, Ramallah, Jericho and Hebron on the west bank of the Jordan, and to prisons in occupied Gaza. They also have access to the Israeli prisons of Ramleh, Kfariona and Achkalon.

In addition, following recent negotiations, the ICRC has obtained authorization to visit, accompanied by a representative of the Israeli authorities, detainees held for interrogation. It then reports to the detaining Power and to the detainees' own government.

In addition, an ICRC delegate pays weekly visits to the prisons named above.

## Rhodesia and South Africa

Continuing the programme begun some years ago, the ICRC, in April and May 1969, sent delegates to visit political detainees in Rhodesia and South Africa.

The mission was carried out by three Swiss delegates; one of them a doctor.

In Rhodesia the delegates only saw the political prisoners under preventive detention. These are of two categories: " detainees " in prisons and " restrictees " in camps.

Visits were made to the prisons of Salisbury, Gwelo, Khami and Sinoia, and the camps of Wa-Wa, Sikombela and Sengwe (Gonakudzingwa).

In South Africa the only prisoners visited were those who had been sentenced and were detained in the prisons of Robben Island, Viktor Verster, Biendonné, Pretoria Central and Barberton.

As customary, the visits were strictly humanitarian in nature, with the purpose of inspecting detention conditions regardless of the reasons for detention.

The ICRC delegates were able to interview detainees of their own choosing without witnesses.

## Latin America

At the beginning of the year, the International Committee of the Red Cross decided to intensify its action in Latin America to strengthen contacts with National Red Cross Societies and governments. A programme was accordingly set afoot for the delegation of representatives from Geneva. Two missions of this nature have already been undertaken this year; one is complete, the other is still under way.

A member of the ICRC, Miss M. Duvillard, who is also a member of the International Council of Nurses, has between April and May carried out a series of visits to the National Red Cross Societies of Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, El Salvador and Venezuela.<sup>1</sup> She had discussions with the National Society leaders on Red Cross organization and development problems, particularly in the field of nursing, nurse-training and first aid.

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<sup>1</sup> See *International Review*, May 1969.

In addition, the ICRC delegate general for Latin America, Mr. S. Nessi, has visited Haiti, Guatemala, Panama and Colombia. Whilst in Haiti he was able to meet the leading members of the National Red Cross. In the other countries he obtained permission from the authorities to visit all places of detention in which there were prisoners and political detainees.

In Guatemala, 18 political prisoners were interviewed in private at the Quetzaltenango penal camp, the Salama penitentiary and the Pavon penal camp. Mr. Nessi also visited the two main police lock-ups in Guatemala city where detainees generally stay only a few days before being transferred to a penitentiary.

In Panama, the ICRC delegate met some hundred political prisoners at the Carcel Modelo in Panama city. He interviewed almost every one of them in private, including a dozen being held in solitary confinement. He then inspected the whole prison.

In Colombia, from 16 to 22 May, Mr. Nessi inspected the Carcel Modelo in Bogota, the Picota prison on the outskirts of the capital and the prisons of the towns of Neiva, Ibagué, Chaparral, Armenia and Cartago. He met more than 200 political detainees.

A report was issued on each visit and forwarded by the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Detaining Power.

All these visits were carried out strictly for humanitarian reasons as is customary. They were restricted to a study of detention conditions, irrespective of the reasons for detention. The purpose was to obtain improved conditions. The ICRC endeavours to arrange, where not already provided:

- the segregation of political and common law detainees;
- regular medical treatment;
- adequate accommodation:
- hygienic conditions;
- food adapted to detention conditions;
- daily exercise out-of-doors and
- regular visits, mail and reading matter.

In June, the ICRC representative is scheduled to go to Peru, Venezuela and Barbados.

The ICRC appreciated the co-operation given by the governments of the countries visited and their understanding for the humanitarian problems of concern to it.

## South Arabia

*Visit to Political Detainees.*—ICRC delegate general for South Arabia, André Rochat, after receiving authorization, carried out further visits to civilian detainees in the Mansura prison at Aden between 3 and 13 May. The previous visit was on 7 and 8 October 1968.

On 30 April, Mr. Rochat also visited two political detainees at the central Crater prison who had been sentenced to death for subversion. As is customary, these visits were strictly humanitarian in nature, being for the purpose of inspecting material conditions of detention irrespective of the reasons for detention.

The ICRC appreciated the better facilities granted by the government to its delegate by allowing him to carry out these visits, thereby testifying to its understanding of the humanitarian problems which are of concern to the Red Cross.

*Material Assistance to Detainees and their Families.*—Following Mr. Rochat's observations on the straitened circumstances of detainees and their families, the ICRC has made a credit available to its delegate to enable him to undertake emergency action to assist them.

*Relief to Civilian Populations.*—Thanks to the surplus dairy products made available by the Swiss government, the ICRC sent 11 tons of milk powder by air to Aden on 24 May. A second consignment of 10 tons was sent by sea, and arrived on 27 May. These 21 tons of milk powder have been delivered to the local Red Crescent Society for distribution to the most needy sections of the population, particularly women and children. This action is being carried out with the assistance and under the supervision of the ICRC delegation in Aden.

*Surgical Assistance.*—The surgical service started by the ICRC in Aden in November 1967 is being carried on. At present a Bulgarian Red Cross team runs the Gamuriah hospital operating services. This is the only civilian hospital for the population of about 1.5 million inhabitants. The team, comprising 2 surgeons and an anaesthetist, took over on 30 April for six months, relieving the previous team provided by the Rumanian Red Cross and which had just completed a second tour of six months in Aden.

In addition, the ICRC has sent a second surgical team, comprising a surgeon and an anaesthetist, both of them Swiss, to Mukallah, the capital of the Hadhramout, due to the trouble prevailing in that region where military wounded and the civilian population had no medical facilities, due to the lack of physicians. This ICRC team at Mukallah has proved its worth, for it is alone in providing surgery for a population of about 400,000. It performs three or four major operations each day as well as a number of minor operations. In view of the signal service which this surgical team provides, the ICRC has decided to maintain it for six months.

*War Disabled.*—Another serious problem of concern to the ICRC is the existence of some 500 war disabled victims of the war in the Yemen.

For several months the ICRC has been seeking help to start up, for the benefit of these unfortunate people, a workshop in Aden for the fitting of artificial limbs and the training of local technicians to take over the workshop.

### **Yemen Arab Republic**

The milk and cheese distribution to children and the maternity and tuberculosis sections of the hospitals in Sanaa, which was started with the help of local authorities towards the end of 1968, is still being carried on under the supervision of the ICRC delegates. The Taiz and Hodeidah hospitals have also been sent milk powder for their tuberculosis patients.

In addition, following the ICRC's appeal to a number of National Societies, those of Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and the Democratic Republic of Germany have sent large donations of medical supplies and clothing to the Sanaa hospital through the intermediary of the ICRC.

### **North Yemen**

The ICRC's mobile clinic continues treating the Yemeni population of Najran and Bir-al-Khadra. The medical team each day deals with about 150 cases.