



(Photos Robin Farquharson-Lagos)

In Lagos, Red Cross relief supplies are stored in inflatable warehouses and...



## NIGERIA



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*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Nigeria**

On the morning of 30 June 1969, the Nigerian Government officially stated that it was putting an end to the assignment which the ICRC had been discharging since July 1968 for co-ordination of relief action in territory controlled by the Federal Government. This decision stipulated that:

the Nigerian Rehabilitation Commission would take over co-ordination, with assistance from the Nigerian Red Cross; relief to Biafra would be subject to control by the federal authorities;  
only people or organisations complying with Federal Government requirements would be permitted to carry out relief operations.

On the same day, in Lagos, members of the Federal Nigerian Government met ICRC representatives and delegates from voluntary agencies. After the meeting, most humanitarian organisations declared their intention to continue their relief action in compliance with the Federal Nigerian Government's new policy. It was also stated that persons and organisations carrying out relief operations would continue to do so during negotiations for the transfer of the ICRC's mandate to the Rehabilitation Commission, and that Lagos airport could be used for daylight flights to Biafra.

On 5 and 6 July conversations were held in London between ICRC Vice-President, Mr. Jacques Freymond, the Federal Nigerian Government Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. O. Arikpo, and the British Under-Secretary of State, Mr. G. Foley. These talks were merely exploratory.

On 9 July, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, ICRC President, left Geneva for Lagos, where he arrived on 10 July. He was accompanied by Mr. E. Bignami, Special Assistant to the President for Nigerian Affairs, Mr. G. Hoffmann, ICRC Delegate-General for Africa, Dr. M. Rubli, Doctor-Delegate in charge of medical relief, and Mr. B. Frey of the Geneva Relief Bureau. The aircraft also took a large consignment of medical supplies for Federal controlled territory.

Discussions took place on 10, 11, and 12 July between Mr. Naville and Members of the Nigerian Government. On 12 July, the ICRC President was received by General Gowon. The following day he and Chief Anthony Enahoro, Federal Commissioner for Information and Labour, issued a joint press release according to which:

The two parties will co-operate for the transfer to the National Rehabilitation Commission of relief action co-ordination in Federal territory, so far entrusted to the ICRC by the Federal Military Government;

The ICRC may continue its traditional activities in co-operation with the Nigerian Red Cross;

The date of the transfer will not be known before completion of discussions between ICRC experts, the Rehabilitation Commission, and the Nigerian Red Cross;

The ICRC is prepared to consider Federal Nigerian Government proposals for the forwarding of relief to the secessionist province; it undertakes not to fly over federal territory without government authorisation;

The Nigerian Government undertakes to guarantee the safety of the personnel in federal territory and of aircraft on humanitarian missions flying in the air-corridors assigned for that purpose;

At the request of the ICRC President, the Federal Nigerian Government authorises one liaison flight to the secessionist area to take medical supplies and relieve personnel whose contracts have expired.

After visiting Enugu, where the headquarters for the relief operations in the northern sector of the federal territory have

been set up, President Naville returned to Geneva on 15 July. At the moment, negotiations in Lagos are in abeyance, pending receipt of all technical reports on such matters as logistics, personnel, finance and equipment. These reports will form the basis of arrangements for the transfer of the ICRC's mission to the Nigerian Rehabilitation Commission.

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As regards the relief action itself, mentioned here at the end of July, the Federal authorities, having given it permission to carry out an emergency air operation by night, the ICRC counts on carrying some thirty tons of medical supplies to secessionist territory (Biafra) and where the situation is continuing to deteriorate. On the other hand, negotiations have been proceeding for the transport of relief by day and also to open up a water corridor for that purpose. On 20 July distributions of food and medicine to the Biafra population were continuing, but at an extremely reduced rate and it is the children who are suffering the most from this alarming state of affairs.

On the Federal side, relief distributions are being pursued, thanks to large stocks of food and medicine which have been maintained on Federal territory by the ICRC.<sup>1</sup> Aid brought in July can be estimated at about 2,000 tons.<sup>2</sup>

## Middle East

*Family Reuniting Operations.*—A further operation of this kind took place under ICRC auspices on 18 June at El Qantara. Sixty-seven Egyptians, including six released from detention in the Gaza and Ramleh prisons, were thus able to return to the United Arab Republic and 147 Palestinians, seven of them doctors, were also repatriated to occupied territory.

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<sup>1</sup> The following rectification to the figure quoted in the last paragraph of the article "Help to war victims in Nigeria" which appeared in our previous issue: 25 thousand tons of food instead of 25 tons.

<sup>2</sup> *Plate.*—In Lagos, Red Cross relief supplies are stored in inflatable warehouses and one of the ships chartered by the ICRC will leave for Calabar where relief will be distributed to the victims of the war.

*Prison Visits.*—ICRC delegates in May and June went to nine prisons in Israel (Kfar, Yona, Ashkelon, Ramleh), six on the occupied western bank of the Jordan (Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem, Ramallah, Jericho and Hebron) and one in Gaza. The number of civilian Arab detainees was 2,144.

Proposals were made to improve detention conditions. These were attentively studied by the General Commissioner of Prisons, and some were put into effect immediately.

The Israeli authorities permitted the ICRC delegates to organize free bus transport to prisons for families who could not afford to visit detained relatives. Standard parcels will be distributed by the ICRC delegates to all prisoners unable to receive parcels from their families.

ICRC delegates have carried out a series of visits to prisoners in the occupied territories of Gaza-Sinai and the West Bank of the Jordan. As for all such visits, only conditions of detention were examined.

*Repatriation of bodies of soldiers.*—On 10 July 1969, the Israeli authorities repatriated to the United Arab Republic, through the ICRC delegations at Gaza and Cairo, the bodies of nine Egyptian soldiers who were killed in combat on the eastern bank of the Suez canal.

In addition, on 15 July 1969, the U.A.R. authorities, through the ICRC, repatriated the body of one Israeli soldier who was seriously wounded when captured on the eastern bank of the canal on the night of 1-2 July and who died despite the medical attention he received.

*Red Cross truce.*—During a few hours of truce, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, from Egypt and from Israel, organized and supervised an exchange of prisoners of war and civilians at El Qantara on the Suez Canal on 28 July.

These Egyptian and Israeli prisoners were captured during recent operations. Simultaneously with their exchange, the 34th family reuniting operation took place, involving 177 people.

Of these, 130 were Palestinians from Egypt going to join their families in the Gaza strip, and 47 were Egyptians from El Arish joining their families in the Nile valley. All were civilians who had been separated from their families during the events of June 1967.

## **Vietnam**

In June 1969, the delegates of the ICRC visited a prisoner-of-war camp, a screening centre, two interrogation centres, five re-education centres and two military hospitals.

As usual, each of these visits was the subject of a report to the detaining authorities.

## **Malaysia**

Mr. A. Durand, Delegate-General of the ICRC for Asia, visited Malaysia following on the troubles which broke out in May. The Malaysian Red Cross has developed its activity in an exemplary manner in order to face the problems of assistance raised by the evacuation of the wounded, the influx of thousands of displaced persons and the organization of a tracing service for those missing. A system of correspondence cards, based on the civilian message form, has been prepared for persons held as a result of the events and who have not yet been able to give their news to their families.

## **North Yemen**

The ICRC medical team, which withdrew to Najran at the beginning of the year because of the development of the situation in the area, continues to give treatment to the Yemeni inhabitants. The team, originally consisting of a doctor and three male nurses, is now reduced to two male nurses, who in the present state of affairs are sufficient to deal with a daily average of 100 to 120 cases presenting themselves at the ICRC polyclinic.

## Arab Republic of the Yemen

The relief action undertaken at Sanaa for certain categories of children, women and sick since November 1968 has been continued and extended. At the present moment about 4,000 are benefiting from this assistance in the form of regular distributions of milk and cheese. Such aid will be pursued over the coming months. Distribution of this relief is regularly supervised by the ICRC delegate, who returned to Sanaa from 25 June to 7 July. During that period he also went to Hodeidah to take reception of a considerable donation of the Rumanian Red Cross intended for hospitals in Sanaa to arrange for its transport as far as the capital and ensure its being handed over to the beneficiaries.

## South Arabia

*Medical Action.*—The ICRC surgical team, composed of two surgeons and a highly qualified anaesthetist, is continuing at the Al Gambouriah hospital to give operation treatment, practically alone, to the local population. This team, placed at the ICRC's disposal by the Bulgarian Red Cross, will be continuing until October its intensive work started in Aden at the end of April 1969. It will be joined for two months by Professor Francesco Castellano, neurosurgeon and medical head of the collective hospitals in Naples, who has voluntarily offered his services to the ICRC to accomplish a mission of humanity during his holidays.

*Assistance to detainees.*—After the latest visits made by ICRC representatives to persons under detention in Aden for political reasons, the delegation of the ICRC in Aden has provided these detainees with the necessary emergency relief, such as mattresses, blankets, underclothes and soap. In addition, having observed their families' acute need a relief action has also been undertaken on their behalf since June. This consists chiefly of distributions of milk and vitamins to infants, and rice, vegetable fats, sugar and tea to women and the aged.

*Aid to the civilian population.*—The ICRC has sent out 40 tons of powdered milk to Aden. This was in aid of certain categories

of the population who, unable to provide for their own needs, found themselves in an alarming state of under-nourishment. This action, supervised and directed by the ICRC delegation, has been carried out since June in close co-operation with the local Red Crescent which ensures its implementation in excellent conditions. Three distribution centres have now been installed in Aden where more than 5,000 have already benefited from such assistance which will be maintained and developed in the coming months.

*War disabled.*—The fate of large numbers of war disabled continues to be closely followed by the ICRC which has again had an urgent request for assistance on their behalf. The ICRC is at present trying to find outside help to enable it, as far as possible, to assist these unfortunate victims. Whilst waiting for this humanitarian action to be launched, the ICRC has supplied a second lot of 20 invalid carriages, keenly appreciated by the beneficiaries who can now leave hospital where they were immobilized.

*In the Mukallah hospital.*—The surgical team of the ICRC installed in the hospital at Mukallah, capital of the Hadhramaut, from 15 April to 20 June, has taken over the general surgery service. Although with a capacity of only 140 beds, this hospital is of considerable importance, as it is the only centre for hospital treatment, not only for Mukallah, but also for most parts of the eastern region, so that some 400,000 depend on it. The team, composed of Professor W. Hess, surgeon and Miss G. Péclat, anaesthetist, both of Swiss nationality, has since its arrival replaced the operation theatre in order, set up a post-operation room, installed a polyclinic and a sick ward.

During this period, the team carried out 180 operations with 90 general anaesthetics, given 1298 consultations and treated 73 urgent cases. This shows the intensive activity performed by this team in often difficult conditions. Interrupted by a lack of anaesthetic gas, the work of the Mukallah hospital was able to be resumed on 22 June. Dr. Théo Gerber, surgeon, has relieved Professor Hess. Miss Péclat, the anaesthetist has stayed on.

## Switzerland

Two representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mrs Marguerite Gautier-van Berchem, Member of the ICRC, and Mr. François Payot, delegate, on 9 July, visited the three Palestinians detained in a Zurich prison for having attacked an aircraft of the Israeli airline company El Al on 18 February 1969 at Kloten airport, Zurich. The ICRC representatives talked in private with the detainees. They took note of their requests and enquired thoroughly into their conditions of detention. As customary, a report will be sent to the detaining authorities. The detainees were previously visited on 13 May 1969.

The purpose of these visits, strictly humanitarian, is to inspect detention conditions, irrespective of the reasons for detention.

## Poland

Dr. J. F. de Rougemont, Member of the ICRC, Assistant Director, and Miss L. Simonius visited Poland from 5 to 15 June, 1969. Dr. de Rougemont met sixty-two victims of pseudo-medical experiments in Krakow and Warsaw. These further cases will be submitted in October 1969 to the Neutral Commission, presided by Judge Lenoir.

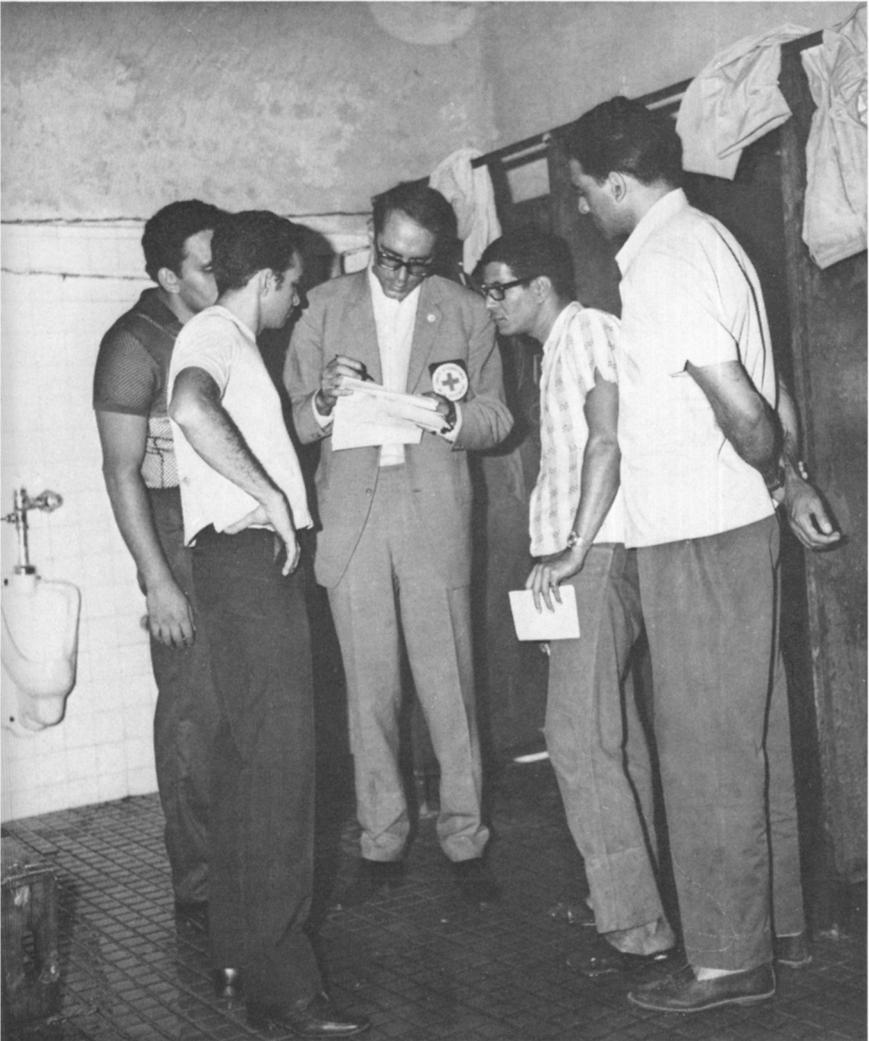
## Latin America

The *International Review* now gives further details of Mr. Serge Nessi's journey, of which mention was made in its June issue.

In June and July 1969, the ICRC delegate-general for Latin America visited Peru, Venezuela, Barbados and Honduras. In the first two countries he obtained permission from the authorities concerned to go to all places of detention where prisoners were being held for political reasons.

In Peru, he visited some sixty detainees, incarcerated in the "El Sexto" and "Lurigancho" prisons in Lima, in the "El Frontón" prison, situated on a small island off Lima and also in the departmental prisons at Huancayo and Cuzco in the interior. These visits were, as usual, of a strictly humanitarian character. They were restricted to the examination of detention conditions,

## VENEZUELA



The ICRC delegate visiting detainees in a prison in Venezuela.

## IN GENEVA



(Photo Jean Zbinden, Geneva)

Ceremony of tribute to the crew members of the Red Cross  
aircraft destroyed in Nigeria.

to the exclusion of their reasons, and their purpose was to obtain improvements in detention conditions wherever these appeared to be necessary.

In Lima, Mr. Nessi took part in a meeting of the Central Committee of the Peruvian Red Cross and made a through inspection of the National Society's installations.

At the request of the latter's President, he gave a press conference and described the ICRC's present activities in the world. He then presented reports both for senior officials of the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for officers of the Senior Staff College.

In Venezuela, from 16 to 18 June, Mr. Nessi successively visited the "Cárcel Modelo" in Caracas, the "Cuartel San Carlos" and the "Los Teques" women's prison to the south of the capital. He was able on that occasion to speak without witnesses with over a hundred detainees.<sup>1</sup> A report on each of these visits will be forwarded by the ICRC to the appropriate governmental authorities.

During his stay in Caracas, the delegate was received by Mr. Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic who showed a keen interest in the activities of the ICRC.

At the end of June he visited Barbados where he met leading members of the local Red Cross, a branch of the British Red Cross, who informed him on current activities.

As a result of the tension existing between El Salvador and Honduras, the delegate of the ICRC went to San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa from 29 June to 2 July, in order to examine the situation on the spot. In Tegucigalpa he attended a special meeting of the Central Committee of the Honduran Red Cross during which several decisions were taken with a view to coming to the aid of the victims of events. An agreement, sponsored by the Nicaraguan Red Cross, had already taken place between the National Societies of the two countries. It arranged the setting up of an information bureau at the headquarters of the Honduran Red Cross.

This additional stop before his return to Geneva enabled the ICRC representative to make direct contact with that Red Cross and also to appreciate the rapid intervention of two National Societies during a particularly difficult period.

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<sup>1</sup> *Plate.*—The ICRC representative visiting prisoners in Venezuela.