

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Middle East

United Arab Republic.—Towards the end of October two visits to Israeli prisoners of war were carried out in the United Arab Republic.

The ICRC delegate in Cairo, Mr. Marcel Boisard, on 26 October, visited a wounded prisoner of war who was captured by the Egyptian armed forces in September 1969.

Two days later Mr. Boisard went to see another prisoner of war, who was captured in August 1969. He had previously been visited on 4 October.

The ICRC delegate talked in private with each prisoner and enquired into detention conditions. He also forwarded mail to the prisoners' families.

Lebanon.—Following the recent events in the Lebanon the ICRC delegation in Beyrouth visited seven wounded Palestinians in the South of the country and two soldiers and two Palestinians in hospital in Beyrouth.

In addition, it visited 34 detained Palestinians. As customary, the ICRC delegates enquired into detention conditions during discussions without witnesses.

Israel.—The ICRC delegate in Israel, on 12 October 1969, visited an Egyptian prisoner of war and two Syrian prisoners of war. He provided them with cigarettes and talked with them in private on detention conditions.

As usual, the report on these visits will be delivered to the Detaining Power and the prisoners' own government.

On 29 October, the delegates in Israel also visited four recently captured Egyptian prisoners of war and four Syrian prisoners of war.

On 6 November 1969, the ICRC delegates visited an Egyptian prisoner of war who had been wounded during capture the previous day by the Israeli armed forces, and was undergoing treatment in an Israeli hospital.

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Continuing the action started in September 1969, ICRC delegates in Israel distributed more than 300 parcels in November to Arab detainees in seven Israeli prisons. The parcels contained clothing and food.

In addition, the prisoners at Ashkelon and Nablus received some 200 kilos of fruit and 250 packages of cigarettes.

Parcels had been distributed also in September and October 1969.

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The bodies of three Syrian soldiers, killed in recent fighting, were repatriated under ICRC auspices on 29 October 1969. This was the first transfer operation across the cease-fire line between Israel and Syria since the end of August this year.

Syria.—On 7 November, the ICRC delegate in Damascus paid a third visit to the two Israeli civilians interned in Syria since the skyjacking of the TWA aircraft to Damascus at the end of August.

The International Committee representative talked with the two detainees in private and inquired into detention conditions

Biafra

At present the ICRC's humanitarian work is being carried on by eight medico-social teams and four surgical teams at Awo-Omamma, Aboh, Mgbidi and Santana. Despite the stoppage of the airlift in June 1969, these teams are continuing their mission in secessionist territory with undiminished dedication. The strength

of these twelve teams and a new sub-delegation at Ozu Abam, east of Umuahia, is about 90.

The medical teams minister to the suffering in nine hospitals, 48 feeding centres and 6 orphanages.

In the Awo-Omamma hospital, north-east of Owerri, four French doctors tend nearly 400 wounded and sick. In the same region, the ICRC also runs a convalescent home where there are 250 patients. The Owerri hospital has one hundred beds and it is planned to increase capacity to 400 beds. At Aboh, a Swiss team of five doctors and nurses specialises in orthopaedic surgery. Some of the Aboh hospital patients are sent to the Ikenenzizi hospital for convalescence. The Mgbidi hospital run by a Norwegian Red Cross team, specialises in plastic surgery.

At the Santana paediatric centre, the French Red Cross team tends 650 children suffering from kwashiorkor or tropical diseases. At Okpuala the ICRC has assumed responsibility for the hospital where there are a hundred in-patients and some 1,800 out-patients. The ICRC is planning to extend its work to the Mbwasi and Emekuku hospitals.

It must be mentioned that in most of the hospitals the teams work in close co-operation with the army medical services and the local Red Cross.

The ICRC also carries on other specialised services. It contributes to the vaccination campaign against measles, small-pox and tuberculosis, as already mentioned in the *International Review*, and has opened an artificial limb workshop at Atta and it also has a blood bank. In addition, its agricultural specialists are concentrating on the improvement of food production.

Malawi

In September 1969 a representative of the International Committee, Mr. Geoffrey C. Senn, visited some 300 political detainees in the prisons of Dzeleka and Lilongwe in Malawi. He interviewed the prisoners about detention conditions but not the reasons for detention.

As usual, the ICRC has reported on this visit to the Detaining Power.

Vietnam

In September and October the ICRC delegates in the Republic of Vietnam have visited a "Collecting Point" controlled by the forces of the Republic of Korea, in the region of Qui-Nhon.¹ They also visited wounded and sick prisoners of war in the Vietnamese military hospital at Hué and the American military hospital at Da-Nang. During each visit, they talked in private with the prisoners. As usual the reports on these visits were sent to the detaining authorities.

In addition, on 30 September and 1 October 1969, the delegates of the ICRC in the Republic of Vietnam visited Qui Nhon camp in which were prisoners of war held by the Vietnamese armed forces, and on 14 October the re-educational centres at Chu Doc and Cao Lanh in the Mekong delta. They inquired into detention conditions.

Laos

In October the ICRC handed over funds to the Lao Red Cross, in order to aid the civilian population displaced as a result of the fighting.

This financial contribution enabled eleven relief distributions to be carried out by the provincial committees of the National Society. The victims received clothing, food, matting and mosquito nets, medicines, vaccines and vitamins.

Latin America

Mr. Serge Nessi, delegate-general of the ICRC for Latin America, left Geneva on 6 November on a mission which took him first to the United States, then to Latin America.

In Washington, he had talks with leading members of the American Red Cross and made contact with the different services of the Organization of American States (OAS).

¹ A "Collecting Point" is a camp attached to a unit of the Vietnam, US or South Korean armed forces in which all Vietnamese arrested in the course of military operations are identified. They are then either released or sent to a prisoner of war camp if the provisions of the IIIrd Geneva Convention apply to them. If they are civilian detainees, they are sent to prison.

The first country in Latin America to be visited by the Committee's representative was Mexico, where he took part in the IVth Seminar of Presidents and Technical Personnel of the Red Cross Societies of Central America, the United States and Canada. The general theme of this seminar was first-aid, voluntary personnel and mutual aid between Red Cross Societies in cases of disaster. Meetings had also been arranged with the leaders of the Mexican Red Cross.

From 30 November to 6 December, the ICRC delegate-general was present in Montevideo (Uruguay) at the IIIrd regional Conference of Red Cross Societies of the South of the Continent. Arrangements have also been made for Mr. Nessi to visit Paraguay, and to conclude his voyage he will go to Brazil where he will make contact with those newly in charge of the National Red Cross Society.

Arab Republic of the Yemen

Responding to a request for assistance to the inhabitants of the Sa'da basin in the North of the Arab Republic of the Yemen, ICRC delegates at Sanaa went to that region and reported on the extreme destitution of the civilian population and on the great number of victims of the recent conflict who have been without medical attention. This emergency is aggravated by the crop failure due to drought.

Anxious to help the inhabitants of the stricken region as far as it can, the ICRC despatched 14 tons of relief goods by air. An aircraft made available by the Swedish Red Cross took off from Geneva on 22 November with 7 tons of milk powder, 3½ tons of cheese, 400 blankets, 400 sheets, emergency medicines and dressing materials.

The value of the consignment exceeds Sw. frs. 82,000. It was unloaded in the Yemeni capital on 23 November and forwarded to Sa'da and distributed to the civilian population by the ICRC.

In addition, a doctor and a male nurse will leave Geneva for Sa'da at the beginning of December. They will provide emergency care for the sick and wounded; the more serious cases will be removed to Sanaa, the capital.

Pending the arrival of the provisions which left Geneva on 22 November, the Sanaa delegation took steps to meet the most urgent needs. A ton of milk powder from the ICRC's stocks in Sanaa was flown to Sa'da and distributed. Other consignments of milk which were available to the Ministry of Education have also been sent to schools in the townships of Umran (1,200 kilos), Chamer (900 kgs), and Sa'da (2,100 kgs).

In Sanaa the ICRC delegates, continuing the action begun a year ago, delivered 4 tons of milk powder to schools and hospitals. The ICRC also recently despatched emergency medicines and surgical equipment which are completely lacking in the Sanaa hospitals. These relief supplies are valued at almost 10,000 Swiss francs.

As can be seen, the humanitarian action started in the Yemen by the ICRC at the beginning of 1962 is today as necessary as ever.

IN GENEVA

Tribute to Mr. Jacques Chenevière

In its session of 6 November 1969 the ICRC appointed a new member, Mr. Jacques Chenevière. On 6 November 1919, fifty years later day for day, the International Committee paid tribute to this man who for so many years devoted himself to the Red Cross ideal. Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President, said in a mood of praise:

Exactly fifty years ago today, on 6 November 1919, our colleague, friend and doyen, Jacques Chenevière, was elected to membership of the ICRC, after having worked for it since 1914. Fate has managed things well, since 6 November is the very day on which we hold our plenary session.

I would not let this great date go by without expressing to our revered colleague our profound gratitude and you can well imagine