

# INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

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## *EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES*

### **Middle East**

*Repatriation operation.*—On 2 March 1970, six detained Arab civilians, three of whom were wounded of Palestinian origin, crossed the Israeli-Jordan cease-fire line at Allenby Bridge under ICRC auspices.

*Reuniting of families.*—There took place on 5 March an operation for the reunion of families organized by the ICRC on the Suez Canal. Sixty-four Egyptians returned to the west bank of the Canal to rejoin their close relatives, whilst 70 Palestinians were able to go back to their homes in occupied territory at Gaza.

*Visit to 46 Egyptian merchant seamen.*—The ICRC delegates in Israel visited, on 17 February 1970, 46 Egyptian merchant seamen, detained in the civilian prison at Maassiah Camp in Israel.

The International Committee representatives inquired into detention conditions there. As is customary, the report on this visit was handed to the authorities of the Detaining Power and to those of the detainees' Power of origin.

*Visit to an Israeli prisoner of war.*—On 28 February 1970, the ICRC delegate in the United Arab Republic for the second time visited an Israeli prisoner of war held since 14 December 1969.

The International Committee representative inquired into conditions of detention and his report was duly transmitted to the Detaining Power authorities as well as to those of the prisoner's Power of Origin.

*Transfer organized by ICRC.*—A notable humanitarian operation was carried out on the Suez Canal by the International Committee between 24 February and 22 March 1970, after 1,032 Palestinian students, who had passed their baccalaureat examination in the occupied Gaza territory and wished to continue their studies in the universities of the United Arab Republic, received authorization from the Egyptian and Israeli authorities to cross to the western bank of the Canal.

During the transfer operation organized by the ICRC five groups of students crossed the Canal: 258 on 24 February, 219 on 1 March, 255 on 8 March, 232 on 12 March and 68 on 22 March. All these students have been authorized to return to their families in the occupied Gaza territory for their holidays, and at the end of their studies.

### **Arab Republic of the Yemen**

In February 1970, the delegates of the ICRC made a series of distributions of cheese and milk in Sanaa, thus pursuing an action started several months ago.

Nearly 70 tons have been handed over to various establishments and hospitals. Nearly 3,500 people benefited from these supplies, part of which was sent on to Saada in North Yemen.

Five pairs of crutches and three invalid carriages have been given to disabled people.

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As long ago as 1964 the ICRC, in close co-operation with the Red Crescent of the United Arab Republic, was caring for Yemeni war wounded who had had to have limbs amputated.

Several groups of disabled, generally escorted by an ICRC delegate, were sent to the Red Crescent hospital in Cairo for treatment before being fitted with artificial limbs at the Rehabilitation Centre at Aguzah near the Egyptian capital. The ICRC bore the cost for each of them and the authorities of the United Arab Republic provided air transport between Cairo and Sanaa.

However, the number of disabled continuing to increase and the older artificial limbs requiring replacement or repair, it appeared more and more necessary to set up an orthopaedic centre at Sanaa

itself. The government of the Arab Republic of the Yemen again appealed to the ICRC for assistance.

After thorough study, the International Committee recently decided to found an artificial limb workshop in Sanaa, with the necessary machines, tools and material for the production of prostheses. A Dutch specialist in artificial limb manufacture was engaged. He left Geneva for Sanaa on 10 March 1970, and the orthopaedic centre will shortly be opened. The material was despatched in February. This will be the first such workshop founded by the ICRC in that part of the world.

Subsequently a physiotherapist will also go to Sanaa to train the disabled to use their artificial limbs. It is also planned to train Yemeni's to carry on the work when the ICRC hands the workshop over to the government.

### **People's Republic of South Yemen**

An aircraft of the ICRC, loaded with food and medicine, left Geneva on 10 March 1970 and unloaded two tons of rice, three tons of powdered milk and 1 ton of medicine the following day in Aden. The foodstuffs will be used by the delegation for its relief action for certain categories of the needy. The medicines are earmarked for the State hospital (mostly antibiotics and anaesthetic products). It should be recalled that the team working in that hospital was made available to the ICRC by the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR.

After these supplies had been unloaded, the aircraft left for Sanaa in the Arab Republic of the Yemen, carrying the prosthetic specialist and the necessary equipment for the installation of the workshop.

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In co-operation with the Red Crescent Society of South Yemen (a Society which has not yet been recognized but is already active), the ICRC delegates continued distributions of milk powder. 1250 families amounting to about 9,500 persons, of whom 4,500 were children, have benefited from this assistance which was extended to the inhabitants of Bir Fokum, 20 kilometres from Aden.

### **Republic of Vietnam**

The Tet celebrations slowed down the work of the International Committee in the Vietnam Republic. Visits to places of detention were however resumed after the middle of February.

Previously, the ICRC delegates had visited the American Military Hospital at Chu-Lai on 16 January 1970 and, on 4 February, the Korean Forces collecting post at Phuoc Than near Qui Nhon. In these two places, the delegates made inquiries into detention conditions, and reports on these visits were transmitted, as usual, to the Detaining authorities.

### **Laos**

The ICRC delegates in Laos continued to distribute relief to persons having fled the fighting areas, in Xieng-Khouang Province (Plaine des Jarres region).

In co-operation with the Lao Red Cross, the representatives of the International Committee have again gone to Luang Prabang and in the neighbouring villages. They also handed over relief to the wounded and sick under treatment in the civilian hospital and the military hospital of the Royal capital.

On their return to Vientiane, the delegates took part at the Mahosot Hospital in the distribution of clothing and medicines of the Lao Red Cross for the sick evacuated from the Plaine des Jarres.

### **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

After the skyjacking of a South Korean aircraft on 11 December 1969 in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the ICRC made representations for the repatriation of the passengers and crew members left in Pyongyang. At the request of the Red Cross of the Republic of Korea, the International Committee approached the Red Cross of the DPRK with a view to obtaining the repatriation of those persons and the reuniting of the families thus dispersed<sup>1</sup>.

Under date of 3 February, the ICRC received a message from Pyongyang stating that, in accordance with their wishes, the pas-

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<sup>1</sup> See *International Review*, March 1970.

sengers would shortly be released by the authorities of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. In fact, 39 of these persons were taken on 14 February to Panmunjom where they were able to reach the Republic of Korea.

The Red Cross and authorities of this country have asked the International Committee to continue making representations for the return of the other occupants of the aircraft.

### Greece

The International Committee of the Red Cross continued in February the mission started on 24 November 1969 in accordance with the agreement concluded with the Greek Government.

The delegates visited several persons in assigned residence in the villages of Nikolaos Kinoureas, Makrakomi Phthitidos and Karpenission (gendarmerie) on 5 and 6 February. They also visited the hospitals at Sothyrias, Aghios Pavlos and Aghios Savas (Athens police), and also the Commissariat of National Security at Bouboulinas and the psychiatric hospital at Daphni on 10 February, as well as the Vourla Clinic (gendarmerie) on 11 February.

Visits to places of detention dependent on the military authorities and the Commissariat of Civil Police at Nea Ionia, which should have taken place between 10 and 14 February were postponed at the Greek authorities' request, and took place early in March.

From 23 to 28 February, a sub-delegation was opened in Salonika to receive the families of detainees who, for various reasons, had not been able to go to the ICRC offices in Athens. At the same time, the delegates of the ICRC carried out a tour of visits to different places of detention in the town (Eptapyrgion and Epanorthotiki prisons, transfer centre and the Commissariat of General Security).

In all places of detention visited, the ICRC delegates were able to move about freely and talk without witnesses and without any time limit with detainees of their own choosing. As usual, reports on the visits have been transmitted to the Detaining authorities.

During the same period, 262 families presented themselves at the ICRC office for enquiries of a family nature. Material assistance as laid down by the Agreement of 3 November 1969 on behalf of needy families was continued.

The delegation consisting of two delegates and one doctor-delegate was directed by Mr. Laurent Marti. Appointed to a new post at ICRC headquarters on 1 March, Mr. Marti was replaced on 15 March by Mr. Max Stalder.

### **German Federal Republic**

From 11 to 15 February 1970, Mr. H.-G. Beckh, former delegate and Mr. M. Borsinger, ICRC delegate-general for Europe, visited Bonn at the invitation of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany. They had talks with the executive committee members of the German Red Cross, amongst whom were President Bargatzky, Mr. Schlägel, Secretary-General and Mr. Wagner, Deputy Secretary-General. Mr. Beckh and Mr. Borsinger also had meetings in parliament with Mr. Carlo Schmid, Vice-President of the Bundestag, in his capacity as member of the Commission for International Affairs of the German Red Cross.

### **ICRC Representatives' Mission in North Europe**

From 15 to 24 February 1970, Mr. Raymond Courvoisier, ICRC Executive Director a.i., and Mr. Georges Hoffmann, Delegate General for Africa, went to North Europe where they had talks with the National Red Cross Societies and governments of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

The two ICRC representatives exchanged views on the International Committee's mission in Nigeria to which several National Societies and governments had so generously contributed.

### **Switzerland**

On 26 February 1970, Mr. Marcel A. Naville, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Louis Le Fort, Secretary-General, was received at the Palais Fédéral in Berne by Mr. Hans-Peter Tschudi, President of the Swiss Confederation. During the interview Mr. Naville outlined the International Committee's current activities.

The previous day he and Mr. Le Fort met Mr. Pierre Graber, Head of the Federal Political Department.

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Accompanied by members and senior officials of the ICRC, the President of the ICRC was received on 11 March 1970 at the headquarters of the Swiss Red Cross by Professor Hans Haug, National Society President. The visitors were able to better acquaint themselves with the many activities undertaken by the Swiss Red Cross and to visit the new hospital building, the new Red Cross nursing school at Lindenhof, the new central blood transfusion service laboratory and the storage depot.

The discussions which followed centred on the common problems arising from the presence in Switzerland of two Red Cross institutions which, however, have different duties. The National Society's contributions to the work of the ICRC in war zones and in the development of international humanitarian law have many times been remarkable.

## Central America

Mr. E. Leemann, ICRC delegate, left Geneva on 14 February 1970 to carry out a mission of several weeks in Central America.

The first two countries visited by the representative of the International Committee were Honduras and El Salvador. It will be recalled that the ICRC intervened as a neutral intermediary in these two countries during the conflict last July and concerned itself chiefly with prisoners of war and interned civilians.

Mr. Leemann then went to Guatemala, where he was authorized by the authorities to visit several places of detention. He went to the Santa Teresa prison for women, the Salamá penitentiary, the "penal farms" of Quetzaltenango and Pavón and various police stations.

Mr. Leemann met some fifty persons held in detention for political or ideological motives or offences. As customary the visits, a previous series of which had been carried out in 1969, were for strictly humanitarian reasons, since the ICRC never investigates the grounds for detention.