

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Africa****Southern Africa****Two ICRC missions**

The ICRC recently sent two missions to southern Africa, as part of its campaign to make its activities better known and to promote humanitarian principles in the regions where conflicts have been taking place.

The ICRC Director of the Department of Principles and Law, Mr. Jacques Moreillon, went first to Tanzania and was received in audience on 28 July by the Head of State, President Julius Nyerere. Mr. Moreillon was accompanied by Mr. Kai Warras of the League of Red Cross Societies, Mrs. Mackeja, Secretary General of the Tanzania Red Cross Society, and Mr. Frédéric Steinemann, ICRC regional delegate for southern Africa. He gave a general account of the ICRC's activities in various parts of Africa and described its efforts to bring relief to the conflict victims and the difficult circumstances under which sometimes its delegates had to perform their tasks. Mr. Moreillon stressed that it was a matter of urgency for the signatories to the Geneva Conventions to ratify the 1977 Protocols, so that the ICRC should be empowered to extend its humanitarian mission to all victims.

Mr. Moreillon next went to Botswana and Zambia. On 16 August, he was received at Gaborone by the President of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama, and Lady Khama, President of the National Red Cross Society. On 21 August, Mr. Moreillon had a meeting with the Head of State of Zambia, Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, at Lusaka.

The three Heads of State all showed keen interest in the work of the ICRC and urged it to continue its humanitarian programmes in Africa, particularly in its southern part.

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The head of the ICRC Press and Information Division, Mr. Alain Modoux, made two journeys to southern Africa, once in August and again in September. The purpose of his visits was to organize a large-scale information campaign covering seven countries, namely Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, the Republic of South Africa and the five countries known as the "front-line States".

It is hoped that, by the output of information material specially adapted to local conditions, all sections of the population—civil and military authorities, leaders of the liberation movements, schoolchildren, university and higher institute students, civilians, and all combatants—will come to know the Red Cross.

The ICRC sent three of its staff to deal with questions regarding information and public relations. In September two meetings were organized in Lusaka and in Salisbury, in which African communication specialists took part, to arrange the details of the information campaign and start it in the various countries concerned.

Repatriation of prisoners of war

On 2 September 1978 the People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of South Africa carried out, under the auspices of the ICRC, the repatriation of eight South African prisoners of war detained in Angola and three Cuban prisoners of war detained in the Republic of South Africa.

By this act the two parties expressed their determination to respect the letter and the spirit of the Third Geneva Convention.

At this operation, the two parties took the opportunity to hold a meeting at which a number of questions of common interest were discussed. The two parties, as well as the ICRC, expressed their gratitude to the authorities and the population for their active contribution to the success of this operation.

Tanzania

From 23 to 25 July 1978, a co-ordination meeting, sponsored by the Tanzania Red Cross Society and the ICRC, was held at Dar-es-Salaam, attended by representatives of the Red Cross Societies and Red Cross groups of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia and by delegates of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Mozambique,

no Red Cross association having yet taken shape in Mozambique. A delegation from the League of Red Cross Societies was present as an observer.

The purpose of the meeting was to study various ways and means for Red Cross Societies to go to the aid of the victims of the conflicts in various areas and to ensure co-ordination between their own activities and the ICRC's emergency operations. The meeting produced a constructive exchange of ideas and suggestions.

On the same occasion, at a meeting with the representatives of various national liberation movements, the roles of the ICRC and of the Red Cross Societies were explained and reasons given why it was necessary to support their humanitarian action.

At this co-ordination meeting, the participants decided to reinforce their action to help the victims of armed conflicts in southern Africa, and to examine how they could take part in all or some of the following activities: various forms of supplementary assistance for refugees and displaced persons; the setting up of special actions in aid of war disabled persons; the organization of tracing agencies; and the dissemination of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions, of the principles of the Red Cross and of the Red Cross in general.

Mozambique

The medical programme for the victims of the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, set up jointly by the ICRC, the Government of Mozambique and ZANU, is working according to plan. In July the first ten amputees fitted with artificial limbs had completed their treatment and thirty other persons had been registered for similar prostheses.

During a mission performed in August at the request of the Mozambican Ministry of Health, Dr. Philippe Girod, of the ICRC Medical Division, found that the programme was working satisfactorily. In addition, he examined with Mozambican officials the possibility of the ICRC's taking part in further medical programmes.

Angola

At the invitation of the newly created "Angolan Red Cross Society", Dr. Rémi Russbach, ICRC Chief Medical Officer, and Mr. Thierry Germond, delegate, carried out a mission in Angola, from 20 August to 3 September 1978. The ICRC delegates visited various medical establishments at Luanda and had discussions with the Red Cross leaders.

They were also received by Mr. Paulo Jorge, Minister of External Relations, with whom they conferred on various humanitarian problems.

Two assistance projects were examined: to provide aid for the war disabled, in the Huambo area, and to constitute a stock of emergency supplies for the National Society. Accordingly, an initial consignment of emergency medical supplies, to a value of 10,000 Swiss francs, was despatched to the "Angolan Red Cross".

On 30 August the Angolan Head of State, President Agostinho Netto, received Mr. Germond, ICRC delegate, with whom he discussed the possible accession of Angola to the Geneva Conventions.

Dr. Russbach and Mr. Germond also discussed with SWAPO representatives a number of assistance projects under consideration.

Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

In the July-August 1978 issue of *International Review*, it was mentioned that in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe the ICRC had resumed all its activities, some of which had been suspended after the murder of three of its staff in May. Delegates were given strict security instructions and most of their movements are now by air. This has entailed the suspension of visits to certain areas, which can only be reached by road.

These restrictions, however, do not mean that ICRC assistance activities have been stopped. On the contrary, relief supplies worth 140,000 Swiss francs were distributed by the ICRC in July, mostly to the "protected villages".

In the new programme of aid, worked out in August, not only is assistance distributed to the civilians in the "protected villages" and "Tribal Trust Lands", but relief supplies and medical care will be provided for the inhabitants of the African districts in the towns, where thousands of people have flocked, fleeing the rural areas affected by the war. In these places, the ICRC is distributing essential articles (food, blankets, soap, etc.), and its mobile medical teams are moving from one district to another giving medical consultations at regular intervals. One of the difficulties is to find accommodation for displaced persons; the ICRC is actively searching for a swift solution to this problem.

The question of persons detained in connection with the events continues to be a matter of concern to the ICRC.

East Africa

Somalia

Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, Special Assistant to the President of the ICRC and member of the Executive Board, was in Somalia from 20 to

23 August 1978, and was received in Mogadishu by the President of the Somali Democratic Republic, Mr. Mohammed Siad Barre. Mr. Pestalozzi described the role and work of the ICRC in assisting and protecting the victims of armed conflicts. He then met various members of the Somali Government, including the Minister of Education, Mr. Aden Mohamed Ali, with whom he discussed the question of the spread of knowledge of the Geneva Conventions.

Mr. Pestalozzi conferred also with the leading officials of the Somali Red Crescent, who expressed their thanks to the ICRC for its work for the benefit of the Ogaden conflict victims.

Mr. Pestalozzi next visited the Martini Hospital where an ICRC medical team is co-operating with the authorities and National Society in a surgical programme. A specialist in maxillo-facial surgery was in Somalia from May to August and carried out about fifty operations. At this hospital there are two physiotherapists, sent by the Danish and Norwegian National Societies for the rehabilitation of war disabled soldiers and a German male nurse for the care of paraplegics.

West and Central Africa

Zaire

The emergency phase of ICRC aid in Shaba was brought to a close at the end of August. It begun immediately after the events which had so grievously affected the civilian inhabitants of the province and lasted for three months and a half. During this period, the ICRC distributed 436 tons of food, medicaments, blankets and clothing, to a value of 569,000 Swiss francs. Medical supplies were sent to the hospitals in Kolwezi, Mutshasha, Dilolo, Kasembe and Nseke. The ICRC was instrumental in reactivating a score of rural dispensaries.

ICRC work will continue in Zaire, but in Shaba Province it will restrict its action to the despatch of medical consignments to a number of dispensaries.

As regards its protection activities, the ICRC is continuing its efforts to obtain access to persons detained because of the Shaba incidents or for State security reasons. As a first step, the Zaire Government agreed on the principle of allowing the ICRC to visit the camp at Lokandu after August. The ICRC is hoping that its delegates will soon be able to carry out this visit.

Following the amnesty decreed by the Zaire Government and the agreement it signed with the Government of the People's Republic of Angola, several thousand refugees have now returned to Zaire.

Chad

Despite the often trying working conditions caused by transport and other logistic difficulties, the ICRC delegates based at Faya-Largeau carried on their assistance and protection activities for the prisoners of war in the hands of the FROLINAT. In July, they visited six camps holding 447 prisoners and distributed twenty tons of meat, flour, millet, sugar, oil and tomatoes. Depending on the accessibility of the camps, the food supplied was for one or for two months.

About twenty camps holding approximately 2,500 prisoners of war, some of whom have their families with them, are currently visited by the ICRC.

The most important task of the local bureaux of the Central Tracing Agency in Chad consists in forwarding family messages exchanged by the prisoners of war and their relatives in the south. Two more delegates have been despatched by the ICRC as reinforcements for its staff in Faya and N'Djamena.

In September, the ICRC succeeded for the first time in reuniting the dispersed members of a Chad family. A woman and two of her children, who happened to be in an area under FROLINAT control, joined her husband and remaining four children in N'Djamena.

The ICRC hopes that the two parties to the conflict, mindful of their humanitarian duties, will facilitate its task with a view to settling further urgent cases of members of families wishing to be reunited.

Latin America

Nicaragua

The combats in Nicaragua which broke out at the end of August called for emergency action by the ICRC. In conformity with its traditional role as a neutral intermediary, the ICRC despatched Mr. Raymond Chevalley, its regional delegate for Central America and the Caribbean, to the Nicaraguan capital. On his arrival in Managua on 31 August, Mr. Chevalley immediately got in touch with the Nicaraguan Red Cross

and government authorities, with the aim of co-ordinating assistance. The National Society, which had been active at the time of the seizure of hostages at the Managua National Palace on 22 August, had already had contacts with Mr. Jürg Vittani, Director of the League of Red Cross Societies Relief Supplies Bureau, who happened to be in Managua at the time.

On 12 September, Mr. Chevalley was received in audience by President Anastasio Somoza, who assured him the ICRC mission would enjoy his full support. With regard to protection, the ICRC was granted authorization by President Somoza to visit all persons held in detention, whether arrested before or after the outbreak of the conflict. The first visit by ICRC delegates was made on 26 September to a place of detention in Managua, where they saw 117 detainees.

For assistance, on the basis of estimates made by Mr. Chevalley and Dr. Raymond Birchler, medical delegate, who had joined the regional delegate in Managua on 9 September, the ICRC launched an appeal for 756,500 Swiss francs, needed to meet the situation and to assist the National Society. Although the fighting gradually died down, the humanitarian needs increased considerably within a very short time, exceeding the National Society's resources, and it was estimated that by the end of September there were in Nicaragua 25,000 displaced persons who had fled their homes during the combats and more than 9,000 others who had taken refuge in neighbouring countries, most of them in Honduras.

The ICRC, therefore, decided to increase its staff in Managua and on 23 September sent a delegate specialized in relief activities, a delegate specialized in prison visits, and a medical delegate. It also made a further appeal for more funds, on the basis of estimates calling for an expenditure of 2.2 million Swiss francs over the next three months. Two million francs will be spent on purchases of food and the remainder on medicaments and surgical equipment.

During the fighting, the ICRC, working closely with the National Red Cross Society, organized convoys to several towns for the evacuation of non-combatants (mainly women and children). It was during one of these hazardous operations that two young Nicaraguan Red Cross voluntary workers, José Dolores Estrada Granizo and Martin Alberto Flores Salazar, were killed when their vehicle, part of a Nicaraguan Red Cross convoy, was attacked on the road from Managua to Leon. All the vehicles in the convoy were conspicuously marked with the red cross.

This tragic incident led the ICRC to repeat its appeal to all the parties involved to respect the mission and the emblem of the Red Cross. The

ICRC regional delegate, Mr. Chevalley, had previously asked that Red Cross humanitarian activities should be respected and protected.

The two international bodies of the Red Cross were deeply distressed by the murder of the two Red Cross workers while carrying out their humanitarian tasks. In their messages to the families of the deceased and to the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the ICRC and the League paid tribute to the courage and devotion displayed by all the members of the National Society and stressed once again their support to the Nicaraguan Red Cross in the splendid work it was performing in these difficult times.

Argentina

During July and August, ICRC delegates continued their activities to protect and assist detainees in Argentina. They visited in the course of these two months seven places of detention, where they saw some 2,000 detainees.

Relief supplies were distributed to needy families of detainees and to the detainees themselves.

In August, 839 such families in Argentina received aid parcels to a value of 13,845 US dollars. Assistance to the detainees amounted to 1,500 US dollars.

Chile

Eight places of detention containing a total of 50 detainees were visited in July and August by the ICRC delegate in Chile. During this period the ICRC continued to provide aid to needy families of detainees. In July it distributed 14,689 US dollars' worth to approximately 3,100 persons of this category and 590 US dollars' worth to the detainees.

Europe

ICRC President in USSR

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, went on a mission to the USSR from 18 to 27 September. He was accompanied by Mr. J. P. Hocké, Director of ICRC Operations, and Mr. P. Grand d'Hauteville, regional delegate for Europe.

The President of the ICRC had various talks with Mr. V. A. Baltiyski, President of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the Soviet Union, Mr. I. A. Teterine, Liaison Officer to the ICRC, and with other senior officials of the National Society. He also met Mr. V. Kirilline, Vice-President of the Council and President of the State Committee for Science and Technology, Mr. D. D. Venediktov, Vice-Minister for Health, Mr. S. B. Kozirev, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other representatives of the Soviet authorities.

The conversations dealt with subjects of common interest, particularly the various ICRC activities throughout the world. The Alliance expressed the desire to co-operate more closely with the ICRC in its work in the field, mainly by financial contributions for our institution's activity in Latin America.

Mission to Cyprus and Greece

During the first fortnight of September, Melchior Borsinger, ICRC Delegate General for Europe and North America, and Lix Simonius, Delegate, went on mission to Cyprus where they had interviews with many Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot politicians and with Red Cross Society leaders. They also visited Greek-Cypriots still living in the north of the island.

A further ICRC mission to Cyprus is planned for the beginning of December.

Mr. Borsinger then went to Greece, and from 13 to 15 September conferred with the Hellenic Red Cross Society. He visited also the Red Cross Centre for girl students at Kalavryta in Peloponnesus.

Asia

Thailand

In July and August ICRC delegates in Thailand continued visiting detained refugees arrested for illegal entry into the country. They made 92 visits, during those two months, to detention centres and police stations and saw nearly 4,000 such detainees. As usual, they distributed relief supplies during their visits.

The head of the delegation, Mr. F. Amar, was in the north-east region from 18 to 20 September and discussed with representatives

of various voluntary agencies problems occurring in the provision of assistance to refugees. He also visited the Swiss Red Cross ophthalmological team working among the refugees in the Nong Khai region.

Viet Nam

Since mid-July, the ICRC has been involved in a further series of repatriation flights from Vietnam to Taiwan. These operations, negotiated with the authorities in both countries, should enable some 1,700 Taiwanese who had been resident so far in Vietnam to return to Taiwan.

In July and August 904 people left Ho-Chi-Minh City for Taipeh in six flights organized under ICRC auspices.

A seventh flight took place on 21 September with 150 passengers.

It should be made clear that the ICRC is not involved in the transfer of people of Chinese origin from Vietnam to the People's Republic of China.

Philippines

Since the beginning of August a team of ICRC delegates in the Philippines has been visiting places of detention. In 17 places of detention under civilian and military authority they saw about 1,000 persons detained for political reasons.

Since 5 September, the delegates have been on the island of Mindanao, in the south of the Philippine archipelago. Here they have visited eleven penitentiary establishments in which there were 1,095 detainees, also held for political reasons. In addition, the delegates visited the local Red Cross and assessed the needs of persons displaced by the fighting between the Government forces and the guerilleros.

The ICRC is providing supplies for the victims of this fighting. So far this year, it has shipped 1,581 tons of rice and 200 tons of powdered milk donated by the EEC; these supplies are distributed by the National Society.

Iran

From April to the end of June two teams of ICRC delegates and doctors carried out the third series of visits to places of detention in Teheran and the provinces. They went to 19 places of detention in

which there were 2,040 people detained for political reasons, including subversion.

From July to September further visits were made to persons arrested in connection with recent events and before the declaration of martial law. In these visits, the delegates saw 428 recently arrested persons, most of them in Teheran.

On 22 and 23 September, in a prison in Teheran, the ICRC delegates visited 162 recently arrested people, 40 of them under martial law. Upon the declaration of that emergency measure, the ICRC had requested the Iranian authorities to allow it to extend its protection to all persons arrested and detained as a consequence of recent events. Negotiations are still going on to obtain permission to visit such detainees in provincial prisons.

Middle East

Lebanon

Since the beginning of July, as mentioned in our previous issue, intensive fighting has been going on in East Beirut, necessitating increased activity by the ICRC delegation. In July and August, the delegation delivered to hospitals and dispensaries in the combat zones medical supplies to a value of 158,000 francs.

In the same two months the delegates removed to safety several groups of people who had been blocked without food and medicines in houses surrounded by snipers.

These various operations were carried out despite the serious risks to the delegation personnel.

At the end of August tension was still running high in East Beirut. The delegation organized itself for emergency, so as to be able, in close co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross, to continue working effectively should the situation deteriorate even more. In the Ashrafieh district, in a building which has been reinforced, it has installed a large dispensary to which the wounded may easily be brought for attention and hospitalization.

The situation did worsen in September. Fighting became even more violent. Shells hit several hospitals causing death and wounds among the patients and staff, and the ICRC "Emergency Centre" has rendered signal service by taking in the wounded.

On 2 October, the ICRC launched the following appeal:

The International Committee of the Red Cross is alarmed at the worsening situation in Lebanon. Fighting has resumed, Beirut is again under indiscriminate shelling, and once more the civilian population is in the thick of the battle and suffering heavy loss of life. The activity of hospitals, dispensaries, ambulances and medical services generally has been brought to a standstill by artillery fire.

The ICRC urgently appeals to the belligerents to take measures immediately to ensure that hospitals and medical personnel may continue their work unimpeded and in safety, to agree upon general or at least local truces to permit endangered civilians to seek safety elsewhere, and to cease forthwith the indiscriminate shelling of the civilian population.

The ICRC and the National Society are also concerned for several hundred thousand inhabitants of Beirut who in July fled their homes to seek refuge in the mountains; with the approach of winter, these people are facing serious problems (lodging, supplies, schooling, and so forth).

Nor has the northern part of the country been spared serious fighting. ICRC delegates and Lebanese Red Cross relief workers have had to carry out several missions in villages in the region to treat the sick people, evacuate the injured, seek missing persons and provide dispensaries with medical supplies.

In the south of the country, five persons who had been detained in Israel since the March 1978 events were repatriated. The operation took place on 1 September at Ras Nakura, under ICRC auspices.

Jordan

Two operations took place in August across the Allenby Bridge in the presence of ICRC delegates. On 17 August an Israeli national of South African origin who had wandered into Jordan went back to Israel and on 31 August a Jordanian who had been detained in Israel was repatriated. On 22 September another detainee released by the Israeli authorities was escorted to the Jordan authorities.

Arab Republic of Egypt

On 8 August the ICRC delegation delivered to the monks of the Orthodox Convent of St. Catherine, in the Sinai, 25 tons of food and 25 tons of cement, both from the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Yemen Arab Republic

Delegate Fred Isler was in the Yemen Arab Republic from 11 July to 3 August. He met several members of the Government and Red Crescent leaders at Sana'a.

He also visited two prisons in which there were 500 detainees, 80 of them held for political reasons. He provided supplies for distribution in the prisons.

Israel and the occupied territories

Under ICRC auspices, the return to Cairo University of students resident in the occupied territories of Gaza and Sinai, after their summer vacations, began at the end of August. By 28 September, in nine operations, more than 4,000 students went back to the Egyptian capital. Other operations are planned for October.

The ICRC also reunited families whose members were in the occupied territory and the Arab Republic of Egypt. In all, 447 people crossed towards Gaza and 56 others towards Cairo to return to their families.

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On 12 September, 23 students from occupied Golan and one from Gaza went to Damascus to continue their studies.

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On 28 August, a detainee released by the Israeli authorities was repatriated to the Arab Republic of Egypt under ICRC auspices.