

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Zimbabwe Rhodesia

In September and October, the ICRC delegation in Zimbabwe Rhodesia continued its protection and assistance activities in aid of the victims of the conflict. During those two months, it distributed 541 tons of foodstuffs, 3,000 blankets, clothing, 12.5 tons of soap, and building material for huts, to a total value of 380,000 Swiss francs, to the 68,000 displaced persons throughout Rhodesia for whom the ICRC provides aid at regular intervals.

In Matabeleland Province, the ICRC distributed, in September, fifteen tons of high-protein food to 2,000 displaced persons. In the Fort Victoria district, 2.5 tons of foodstuffs and soap were given to needy persons.

The construction of more houses for displaced persons in Seki Camp, the second stage of an aid programme begun two years ago, is proceeding satisfactorily and 44 families were settled in at the beginning of September.

From additional distribution centres set up by the ICRC in Mashonaland Province, food, soap, blankets and clothing were distributed periodically to displaced families. In Mtoko District, 1,400 kg of various articles were supplied to the victims of a farm which had been burnt down by terrorists. In Victoria Province, 140 families whose houses had been set on fire received similar aid.

During September and October, the ICRC arranged for transport to carry 845 persons to visit relatives detained in Wha Wha prison. A sum of about 10,000 Swiss francs was allocated to provide aid for detainees.

The Central Tracing Agency continued its enquiries for missing persons, and new cases of missing persons have been constantly coming in. During September and October, the Agency forwarded 1,800 messages to separated family members.

Zambia

Assistance to refugees living in camps in Zambia continued during September and October. The ICRC delegation provided about 36 tons of relief supplies—food, blankets, clothing, soap and tents—to a value of 212,000 Swiss francs.

During that same period, the Tracing Agency dealt with 210 enquiries for missing persons.

Botswana

ICRC distributions of relief supplies for displaced persons continued in the camps at Francistown, Selebi Pikwe and Dukwe in September and October. About 46 tons of various goods, worth 150,000 Swiss francs, were distributed.

Mozambique

On 21 September, a Bulgarian national living in Mozambique who had been captured by the armed forces of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, was returned to Maputo under ICRC auspices, after the necessary permits had been granted by all the parties concerned.

Uganda

Completing their visits to places of detention, commenced a couple of months before, two teams of ICRC delegates visited, from 11 to 25 September, 1281 detainees in Soroti and Jinja, in Uganda's southern and south-eastern provinces.

A further series of visits to places of detention was begun on 12 October and is expected to continue until mid-November. Two teams of delegates already visited the prisons at Murchison Bay, Luzira

and Jinja and distributed certain articles of which there was a shortage, such as soap, blankets and disinfectant.

In the second half of September, the ICRC delegates went on an extensive tour of the country. They distributed medical supplies to a score of dispensaries and health centres in Soroti district and in the area between Jinja and Lake Kyoga to a value of 82,000 Swiss francs, and in Kizegi and Ankole districts to a value of 90,000 francs.

From March, when the ICRC programme was begun, until October 1, the ICRC distributed in Uganda over 68 tons of medicaments and medical supplies to a value of about 1,800,000 Swiss francs.

Angola

The Bomba Alta orthopaedic centre for war disabled at Huambo, set up with ICRC co-operation, commenced its activities in September and by the end of the month had already provided prostheses for six amputees. Seven ICRC specialists are working in this centre which is being expanded, and 17 tons of equipment were delivered on 18 October.

Ethiopia

The ICRC continued its aid in Ethiopia during September and October. Over 240 tons of various foodstuffs and articles (such as soap and blankets), cotton cloth for garments, and six medical units were distributed in the provinces of Sidamo, Tigre, Harrar, Bale and Mekele. The delegates also visited seventeen prisoners of war at Harar.

Chad

In September and October, the ICRC continued its assistance and protection activities in Chad. The delegates stationed at Faya distributed 8 tons of food for 344 prisoners of war at Kirdimi, Faya and Fada and visited 211 prisoners of war in the region of Youda and at Gouro, Kirdimi, Digre, Gourma, Yenne and Fada. The delegates in N'Djamena distributed 62 tons of various relief supplies to civilians in the south, while nine hospitals and medical centres in that area were stocked with medicaments to a value of 39,000 Swiss francs. Eight tons of medicaments and medical supplies were distributed in isolated

villages at Abeche, Sarh, Mongo, Bongor, Ati, Moundou and Am Timan.

The two tracing agency offices at Faya and N'Djamena continued to forward family messages between the northern and southern parts of Chad (several thousand were exchanged in September and October) and to make enquiries about missing persons.

Western Sahara

An ICRC delegate carried out a mission in the region of Tindouf from 26 September to 1 October. He distributed 8,000 blankets to the persons in want living in camps in that area.

Latin America

Nicaragua

Throughout September and October, ICRC delegates in Nicaragua continued with their protection and assistance activities, in the prisons they are allowed to visit, in hospitals and for persons having sought asylum in embassies. During September, they visited 2709 detainees in 46 detention centres in 14 different locations. That figure includes 149 detainees who were visited in Managua, 146 being wounded detainees at Ocon hospital and 3 at secondary medical posts.

During these visits, additional food rations were distributed in the prisons; to make this possible, 30 tonnes of foodstuffs were trucked to Esteli, Ocotal, Somoto, Boaco, Juigalpa, Nuevasguinea, Rivas, Jinotepe, Granada and Masaya. Thus all of the detention centres visited received a month's food ration so that the authorities could give the detainees two meals a day.

In October, the ICRC delegates visited 1174 detainees in seven detention centres outside Managua and two hospitals and the "Comando Central de Crusero" in Managua where 197 detainees were recorded.

From 6 to 15 October, the ICRC general delegate for Latin America, Mr. André Pasquier, went to Nicaragua where he had talks with the government authorities on further ICRC activities and in particular visits to the Managua and Tipitapa detention centres.

Finally, 160 persons who had sought refuge in the "Seminario", a building under ICRC and National Red Cross protection, returned home after the ICRC had obtained assurances that their safety was guaranteed.

El Salvador

In September, the Government of El Salvador agreed to the ICRC visiting all of its prisons in accordance with ICRC criteria. The new authorities confirmed that agreement. Consequently, on 26 October, two ICRC delegates started work by visiting the new penal centre in the capital. According to plans, these visits, covering the whole country, will continue for 6 to 7 weeks.

The ICRC also managed to obtain a safe conduct for a wounded soldier who had sought asylum in the Venezuelan embassy. He has thus managed to leave the country for Venezuela.

Argentina

In Argentina, visits to detention centres involving interviews without witnesses have continued. ICRC delegates visited 815 prisoners in eight detention centres in Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Coronda, Concordia, Parana, Rawson, Santa Fé and Villa Devoto. The programme of assistance to the families of detainees continued with 800 families receiving regular monthly relief supplies, mainly food.

Chile

The ICRC regional delegate for the Southern Cone, Mr. François Robadey, visited 57 detainees at the Santiago jail when he made one of his periodic trips to Chile on 27 September.

Asia

Assistance to the people of Kampuchea

Following upon the preliminary assessment and negotiation missions to Kampuchea by ICRC and UNICEF representatives (see *International Review*, Sept.-Oct. 1979), the ICRC and UNICEF have launched a

vast joint relief programme to provide food, drugs and other basic requirements. This relief aid is meant to reach about 2.5 million persons, 700,000 of whom are children or sick persons whose plight in Kampuchea and in the Khmer-Thai frontier zone is critical.

On 19 October, an appeal was made for 111 million dollars to finance the first six months of this joint action; then a further 140 million dollars was requested so that assistance to civilians of Kampuchea could be continued and expanded until the end of 1980, the latter request being made at the "Pledging Conference for Emergency Humanitarian Relief for the Kampuchean People" which was convened in New York on 5 November by the UN Secretary-General.

Mention should be made of the fact that the General Assembly of the League of Red Cross Societies, held in Geneva from 4 to 6 October and attended by the representatives of 101 National Societies, appealed to the international community to support relief work for the people of Kampuchea and to prevent any obstacles to this urgent humanitarian activity.

Also in October, the ICRC and the League jointly called on National Societies to recruit the medical staff necessary for this campaign.

Kampuchea

On 17 November, the authorities of the People's Republic of Kampuchea gave their clearance to the ICRC/UNICEF joint relief programme. Before that, from 9 August to 14 October, seven flights from Europe had carried 233 tonnes of relief supplies to Phnom Penh. Then, from 13 October to 18 November, a plane provided by the British Government, flew daily from Bangkok to Phnom Penh carrying a total of 485 tonnes of relief and basic logistic supplies. Since 18 November, an Australian Government plane has taken over from the British plane to run the daily Bangkok/Phnom Penh shuttle service. On 22 November, it was joined by a French plane. Yet another plane, provided by the Netherlands Government and Red Cross and UNICEF Committee has, since 25 November, been flying daily between Singapore and Phnom Penh. In addition, a ship, carrying 1000 tonnes of rice and three trucks arrived at the port of Kompong Som on 25 October, followed immediately by another ship carrying 4000 tonnes of rice and unloading tackle. Once agreement had been reached with the authorities, the Mekong was opened to navigation so that UNICEF and the ICRC could move the supplies directly to the capital of Kampuchea. The

first ship, carrying UNICEF/ICRC goods, which followed that route—the “Ile de Lumière”—which had been provided by a voluntary French committee, reached Phnom Penh with 1000 tonnes of food and drugs on 19 November. In this way, the ICRC/UNICEF target of supplying 10,000 tonnes of relief supplies to Kampuchea in October and 20,000 tonnes in November was reached.

Now the ICRC/UNICEF delegation in Phnom Penh comprises 14 persons. The distribution of supplies is being carried out under the responsibility of an interministerial committee set up for the purpose by the Phnom Penh authorities. However, the shortage of vehicles, the state of the roads and various organizational problems being faced by the local authorities mean that the supplies are getting through far more slowly than is necessary to meet the requirements and to keep pace with the deliveries which the international organizations are making to the country's ports.

Thailand

In September, Kampuchean refugees started to flood in all along the Khmer-Thai border. The Thai military authorities have set up reception camps in Thailand for the refugees pouring in by the thousands each day. By early November, it was estimated that there were 500,000 to 600,000 Kampuchean civilians along the Thai border. Many were sick and suffering from malnutrition.

Many humanitarian organizations are at work among the refugees in Thailand. General responsibility for refugees in Thailand has been assumed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR). The ICRC and UNICEF have assumed special tasks.

In the border zone, where conditions are extremely unsafe, the ICRC and the UNICEF provide the necessary food and water supplies and this calls for a tremendous logistic effort. During October alone, 1300 tonnes of relief was distributed to the refugees in that area. In the same border zone, the ICRC has also been using trucks and buses to pick up exhausted, sick or wounded refugees and to take them to the camps which they could not have reached unaided.

The ICRC is also co-ordinating medical activities in the camps with the extensive participation of voluntary organizations and National Societies.

In the Sa Kaeo camp, which shelters 30,000 refugees, the ICRC has opened a field hospital with 3000 beds while in the Kao I Dang camp

—a new transit camp with a 200,000 refugee capacity—a field hospital with 1000 beds has been erected. The ICRC has supplied 10 tents and the whole medical equipment to a total value of 230,000 Swiss francs. Other hospitals are being planned.

By 19 November, 132 ICRC and National Red Cross Society doctors and nurses were working alongside 55 doctors and nurses from voluntary agencies. The National Red Cross Societies participating are 17 in number: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom and USA.

The delegates of the Central Tracing Agency, working with the assistance of a large staff selected from among the refugees, are also at work in the camps. Letter boxes have been set up and the Agency sorts and forwards the mail. More than 1000 messages a week are sent abroad from the camps. The Agency has also received many hundreds of enquiries for missing persons from people outside the camps and they are making the necessary enquiries among the refugees.

Indo-Chinese refugees

The delegates from the ICRC Tracing Agency have undertaken many missions to the ASEAN countries to back up the work being done by the Central Tracing Agency and the agency offices of National Red Cross Societies to help the refugees (tracing missing persons and transmitting messages). Contacts have been stepped up with the authorities and the leaders of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macao. On 6 and 7 September a study group and work co-ordination session was held in Kuala Lumpur for representatives of the Societies concerned.

Indonesia

The joint activities of the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross to assist 60,000 inhabitants of East Timor began on 8 October with the arrival in Dili, the capital of East Timor, of a plane chartered by the ICRC, carrying 17 tonnes of food and drugs. On 21 October, a ship unloaded 640 tonnes of relief supplies in the same place, along with 7 vehicles. At the same time, Indonesian Red Cross medical teams, assisted by the ICRC, started to prepare a census of the population in the

eight isolated villages on which the relief activities are to concentrate and to assess their state of health in order to determine their food and drug requirements. Distribution started on 19 October. Only two villages can be reached by road all year round so that supplies to the other sites have to be effected partially or wholly by air.

Governments and National Red Cross Societies to which the ICRC made an appeal for funds responded favourably and provided almost the totality of the 13 million Swiss francs necessary for this campaign which is limited to six months.

Pakistan/Bangladesh

The transfer of persons of Bihari origin who had hitherto lived in Bangladesh and had expressed the wish to go to live in Pakistan continued in September. Between 14 and 26 September, 2871 persons, that is 321 families, were airlifted from Dacca to Lahore, Karachi or Peshawar.

Laos

During a visit to Vientiane, an ICRC delegate delivered to the Lao Red Cross a consignment of medical supplies (1000 litres of alcohol, 2000 litres of serum) and medical equipment worth a total of nearly 6000 dollars. This was immediately forwarded to the capital's hospitals.

Middle East

Lebanon

After the clashes between rival factions in Northern Lebanon on 8 October and the capture of partisans of the opposing camps, the ICRC delegation in Beirut approached the parties concerned in order to gain access to the detainees. The delegates duly visited the detainees, 162 of whom were released on 12 October with the help of the ICRC.

Relief aid—6.5 tonnes of food, 500 blankets and some clothing—was distributed in the town of Tyre and in the nearby Palestinian camps. Powdered milk was given to certain families in three villages in the Marjayoun pocket. Furthermore, 20,000 Swiss francs worth of drugs

was handed to the Lebanese Red Cross; the "Palestinian Red Crescent" received a gift of the same value.

Israel and occupied territories

The ICRC delegates in Israel visited Arab civilian detainees throughout 1979 in detention centres in Israel and in the occupied territories.

Let us recall that, under an agreement with the Israeli authorities, ICRC delegates are authorized to visit detention centres holding Arab civilian detainees, those being held for questioning within 14 days after their arrest and detainees on whom sentence has been passed. Moreover, the ICRC pays for the transport of families who wish to visit relatives being detained but who live far from the prisons. It also supplies extra fruit parcels to all detainees. For detainees who do not receive family visits it provides a small sum of money for each detainee (currently 150 Israeli pounds) to enable him to make minor purchases at the prison canteen. It buys books and magazines for the detention camp libraries. The last-mentioned point is of particular importance for young detainees who wish to continue studying.

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A number of people travelled under ICRC auspices between Israel, the occupied territories and the neighbouring countries in September and October.

During that period, three family reunions were arranged at the Kuneitra crossing point as 14 persons crossed from Syria to Golan. On 13 September, 29 students went from Golan to Syria and four more on 28 October.

On 14 September, five sailors (3 Lebanese and 2 Indians) and on 3 October, one more person, were escorted from Israel to Lebanon.

On 11 October, a released Arab detainee was transferred from Israel to Jordan and a further person on 23 October.

Jordan

A team of ICRC delegates visited, from 8 to 29 October, the detention centres in Jordan, holding 2588 detainees.

Egypt

Mr. Jean Hoeffiger, ICRC general delegate for the Middle East, carried out a mission to Egypt from 25 October to 7 November, during which he had discussions with Mr. Boutros Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, senior officials of the same Ministry and with the Minister of Social Affairs. The general delegate was also received by Mrs. Jihane Sadat, President of the Egyptian Red Crescent, with whom he discussed mainly humanitarian problems in the Sinai region, which had recently been returned to the Egyptian administration.
