

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Appeal for funds

On 15 February the ICRC sent some thirty governments and National Red Cross Societies an appeal for twenty million Swiss francs to finance its humanitarian activities in the Continent of Africa for the first half of 1980.

Delegate general's mission

Mr. Frank Schmidt, ICRC delegate general for Africa, went on mission to southern Africa during the second fortnight of January.

First of all, from 17 to 19 January, he attended in Johannesburg, in South Africa, a meeting of ICRC delegates based in the region.

Then, from 20 to 25 January, Mr. Schmidt was in Zambia where he had occasion to see the ICRC delegation at work and to visit the Solwezi refugee camp in the north of the country. In Lusaka he met the Zambian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and representatives of ZAPU, SWAPO, ANC, as well as those of the HCR and various humanitarian organizations, with all of whom he discussed humanitarian problems caused by the Rhodesia conflict, particularly those related to the imminent repatriation of refugees to Rhodesia.

During the last week of January Mr. Schmidt had a number of talks in Salisbury. He twice conferred with the British Governor, Lord Soames, and he had discussions also with the representatives of the two wings of the Patriotic Front and with notables of diplomatic

and international circles. Mr. Schmidt made contact, too, with the local Red Cross. During these various interviews discussions turned on the ICRC work of protection and assistance in Rhodesia, and particularly on its activities concerning the return of the refugees.

Rhodesia

The British Transitional Government asked the ICRC to participate, by providing medical services, in current activities to enable guerrilleros and civilian refugees in neighbouring countries to return to Rhodesia.

Consequently, at the end of January, two ICRC medical delegates flew at regular intervals to nine of the fourteen assembly points for Patriotic Front forces, in order to assess the medical situation and, where necessary, to provide medical care. The other five assembly points were visited by Patriotic Front doctors.

In addition, two more medical teams have been recruited to assist refugees requiring treatment upon their return: one of the teams, from Finland, is based at the Tegwani mission, on the frontier with Botswana, to tend, in particular, refugees from that country and from Zambia; the other, a Swiss team, has taken up its assignment near Umtali at a place through which refugees pass on their homeward trek. It should be mentioned that the ICRC helps these people only after a selection has been made by the Ministry of Health. This medical personnel reinforces the ICRC previous set-up whose two mobile medical teams carry on their work throughout the country, visiting missions, "protected villages", townships, and so forth.

A Red Cross information campaign has simultaneously been undertaken at the assembly points, where the Information delegates distribute documentary material which is well received by combatants. The showing of films on the Red Cross accompanies the distribution of brochures, strip cartoons and other documents.

The ICRC has also continued its relief activities in January and February for civilian populations affected by the war. In January 285 tons of food, 2.6 tons of clothing, 5.3 tons of soap and more than 800 blankets were distributed among some 70,000 persons throughout the country, and 625 families in townships were given tents, blankets and medical supplies. During the same month ICRC aid to detainees amounted to a value of 1,500 Swiss francs.

Zambia

In February SWAPO asked the ICRC to give medical assistance for some 300 children between the ages of 18 months and six years who were to be transferred from the Niyango camp to Lusaka. ICRC delegates went to the camp on 11 February and on the same occasion distributed milk and blankets. In addition, medicaments to a value of 2,000 Swiss francs were handed over to SWAPO.

Mozambique

An ICRC doctor, Dr. W. Buss, carried out a mission to Mozambique in December 1979. He went to several hospitals manufacturing prostheses with materials provided by the ICRC. He discussed with officials of the government and of ZANU two projects to give medical assistance to the war disabled.

The ICRC gives technical and financial help to two programmes for the benefit of amputees, including manufacture of artificial limbs and rehabilitation of the disabled. Dr. Buss was able to appraise the progress of the current activities and see where ICRC aid should be stepped up.

South Africa

The ICRC continues assisting the families of detainees in South Africa. Clothing and food distributed in December 1979 was valued at 3,000 Swiss francs and in January 1980 at 1,500 Swiss francs. In addition, in the same two months, the ICRC paid the fare for several families to visit relatives detained in the Robben Island prison.

Angola

The ICRC is greatly concerned for the welfare of the civilian population of the hinterland. At the end of February the ICRC delegation in Luanda signed an agreement with the National Red Cross Society of Angola for a joint project to provide that population with food for six months.

Chad

The ICRC continued visiting various prisoner-of-war camps in the BET (Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti) region of northern Chad in January. It also distributed more than seven tons of food for prisoners' families in N'Djamena and to several of the country's hospitals.

The ICRC organized several transfers of people between the north of the country and the capital, and also from the capital to the south of the country. In February 37 adults (former prisoners of war, interned civilians, etc.) and 67 children were thereby able to return to their homes.

These operations took place while talks were going on among the various factions in Chad on the release of all prisoners of war. In this connection we would mention that the ICRC delegates had been received by President Goukouni Oueddei on 24 January, when he handed them a government note reading as follows: "In accordance with the decisions of the 'tendency leaders' reached on 19 January concerning the release of prisoners of war, the "Gouvernement d'union nationale de transition" authorizes the International Red Cross to go into all regions in which there are prisoners, with a view to their total release."

In spite of this, the ICRC delegates have still not been able to carry out this mission and the operations to return prisoners to their homes did not begin on the scheduled date, as a result of dissension. Subsequently the situation became even worse.

Ethiopia

Between the beginning of December 1979 and 20 January 1980 about 100 tons of food, 210 cartons of powdered milk and 46 bales of clothing donated by the ICRC were distributed to the population stricken by the events in the provinces of Harrar, Sidamo and Bale. These goods were distributed by the Ethiopian Red Cross. In addition the National Society delivered to the Meckele and Addis Ababa hospitals blankets which had also been provided by the ICRC.

Djibouti

On 31 January Mr. Eddi Leemann, ICRC regional delegate for East Africa, went to Djibouti, where he stayed ten days. He met the

leaders of the local group of the "Red Crescent" with whom he discussed the question of its future official recognition by the ICRC.

The ICRC regional delegate visited four camps in which there were 14,000 Ethiopian refugees whom the Djibouti "Red Crescent" group is assisting. Following this visit the ICRC decided to allocate to the assistance programmes five tons of powdered milk donated by the Swiss Confederation.

In addition, Mr. Leemann had talks with the Minister of the Interior, who is also chairman of the Government's refugee assistance committee, and with the Director of the Ministry of Health, the Minister of Education, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence. They agreed that the Geneva Conventions should be taught in the armed services, as well as in schools where the ICRC school textbook will be used. During a further interview on 4 February the Minister of the Interior told Mr. Leemann that his country intended later on to ratify the 1977 Protocols.

Seychelles

From 11 to 15 February, Mr. Eddi Leemann, ICRC regional delegate for East Africa, was in the Seychelles and met several members of the Government, in particular the Minister of Defence, with whom he discussed the eventuality of the Seychelles Government's ratification of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

Latin America

Delegate general's mission

The ICRC delegate general for Latin America, Mr. André Pasquier, started on 10 February a one-month mission which took him to seven countries.

In *Brazil*, to begin with, he met the leaders of the National Society with whom he discussed problems of common interest.

From 14 to 21 February he was in *Argentina*, where the ICRC regional delegation for the countries of the Southern Cone has its headquarters. With the delegates he discussed current activities and programmes in the spheres of protection and assistance. He subsequently had talks with the Ministers of the Interior and Justice and with the Army Chief of Staff, on some of the same topics.

Next, in *Uruguay*, Mr. Pasquier had an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He also had talks with the President and other leading members of the National Red Cross Society, mainly on the organization in Uruguay of a seminar for the armed forces on the dissemination of international humanitarian law. The delegate general also took part in a visit to a prison (see below).

In *Bolivia*, from 2 to 4 March, the ICRC delegate general attended in La Paz the "Meeting of Presidents and organizers of technical seminars of Red Cross Societies in South American Countries".

Mr. Pasquier will complete his mission with visits to Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Argentina

The ICRC delegates in Argentina continued visiting places of detention in January and February. They went in January to the "La Plata" prison for a thorough inspection which lasted several days, during which they saw about 750 detainees. In addition, two sick detainees were visited in the Borda hospital. In February the delegates visited, in three places of detention and a hospital at Cordoba, Rio Cuarto and Mendoza, 61 persons in detention for subversion. In Buenos Aires, from 18 to 29 February, they saw 405 women detainees in the "Villa Devoto" prison.

Uruguay

Following an agreement between the ICRC and the Uruguayan authorities, general authorization was granted to the ICRC to visit all civilian and military places of detention in the country. A team of three delegates and an ICRC doctor began a series of visits on 31 January. The ICRC delegate general for Latin America, Mr. André Pasquier, took part in February in a visit to the "Libertad" prison near Montevideo.

Nicaragua

In January and February the ICRC delegates continued protecting and assisting prisoners of war and other persons detained by reason of the events. Some 3,000 detainees were visited in three places of detention in Managua, and more than 1,500 in 14 places of detention in the provinces.

For the first time the ICRC had access to a place of detention under the authority of the Security and in which there were detainees being held for interrogation.

On 13 February an appeal was launched for 2.6 million Swiss francs to finance protection and assistance work during the current year for prisoners of war and civilian detainees in Nicaragua.

El Salvador

The ICRC having been asked to give medical and other assistance to hostages taken on a number of occasions in El Salvador since the beginning of the year, the ICRC medical delegate went several times in January and February to see hostages held by armed bands in banks, ministries, embassies and other buildings in the capital. Each time he administered medical care and he also negotiated the release of some people on health grounds.

The ICRC regional delegate for the Andean countries, with the National Red Cross Society, participated in the transport of casualties in San Salvador after the fighting on 12 February.

The ICRC delegates have now received general authorization to visit detainees in El Salvador.

Asia

A mission by the ICRC President

From 22 February to 12 March, the ICRC President, Mr. Alexandre Hay, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, director of the ICRC

Operations Department, and by Mr. Jean de Courten, delegate general for Asia, undertook a mission to three countries of South-East Asia.

In the *People's Republic of Kampuchea* Mr. Hay, Mr. Hocké and Mr. de Courten met President Heng Samrin, the Minister and Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Vice-Minister of Health, the leaders of the Red Cross and several local dignitaries. From Phnom Penh they went to Kompong Speu, where the Hungarian Red Cross team is working, and to Takmao, where the Soviet National Society team is based.

On 28 February Mr. Hay, Mr. Hocké and Mr. de Courten went to the *Socialist Republic of Viet Nam*. At Ho Chi Minh Ville they had discussions with the leading members of the Vietnamese Red Cross. They then visited the National Society's installations in the Mekong Delta provinces. In Hanoi the ICRC President met the Prime Minister, Mr. Pham Van Dong, after which he went to Lang Son near the Chinese border, thus completing the first visit ever made by an ICRC President to Viet Nam.

In *Thailand* President Hay was received by H.M. King Bhumipol Adulyadej and by H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, Executive President of the Thai Red Cross. Mr. Hay also met Air Chief Marshal Siddhi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and in charge of refugee affairs, and several other members of the Government. The ICRC President went to the frontier region of Aranyaprathet where he visited the relief teams of the joint ICRC-UNICEF mission and saw their work for refugees from Kampuchea.

Assistance to Kampuchea population

In January and February the work carried out jointly by the ICRC and UNICEF for the benefit of the population of Kampuchea made encouraging progress. At the same time, consultations took place in Geneva, New York and in Kampuchea among the senior officials of the various organizations engaged in the relief programmes, with a view to co-ordinating plans and financing this humanitarian action.

Kampuchea

The Government and the Phnom Penh Red Cross have distributed food in several provinces, in the west between Kompong Som and

Phnom Penh, in the north and north-west (Kratie, Kompong Cham and Stung Treng provinces), and in the south and south-east (Svay Rieng and Kampot provinces and the region of Kep). ICRC delegates have at times taken part in Phnom Penh Red Cross distributions, and during their trips in the countryside have seen that the Government was actively distributing.

Lesser quantities of relief goods from the international community were sent to Kampuchea in January in view of the fact that some of the country's warehouses, especially in Kompong Som, were full. The situation improved markedly late in January and in February. Consignments of relief therefore gradually increased, both by air and by sea. The aircrafts chartered by the Red Cross, based on Singapore and Bangkok, made a hundred flights between the end of December and February, taking to Phnom Penh more than 660 tons of food, 168 tons of medical supplies, medicaments, school equipment, blankets and other relief goods, and 83 vehicles. At the same time large quantities of food from WFP and FAO were discharged in the ports of the capital and Kompong Som.

Two medical teams began work in Kampuchea at the beginning of the year. At the end of January a team of ten persons seconded from the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR started work in the Takmao hospital (in the Kandal province). At the beginning of February a team of five from the Hungarian Red Cross started work at Kompong Speu, to the west of the capital. A third team, of Polish Red Cross personnel, arrived in Kampuchea at the beginning of March and began its work in the province of Kompong Cham.

Concomitantly with the medical care provided by these teams, many convoys organized by the Red Cross of Phnom Penh have supplied hospitals and dispensaries with medicaments and medical equipment.

Thailand

In the joint operations with UNICEF and the HCR for refugees from Kampuchea, the ICRC has continued its work of medical co-ordination along the Thai-Khmer frontier. At the beginning of January *fighting between rival groups in the region caused some activities to cease for several days.*

During the fighting a number of refugees in the camps along the border region were killed and many were wounded. ICRC hospitals and dispensaries were burned and looted and a food convoy was attacked by armed marauders. As a result of this violence, thousands of panic-stricken refugees fled. Some were transferred to the Khao I Dang camp, some swelled the crowds at other assembly points on the border, others surged back into Kampuchea.

To cope with this emergency, the ICRC, UNICEF and voluntary agencies working on the spot took special measures. Medical teams were placed on standby in Khao I Dang and other camps to tend casualties. Delegates' movements and relief distributions along the frontier were restricted or suspended because of the danger. Not until 14 January did a Red Cross convoy return to the camps and went to Phnom Chat. In the days which followed provisioning of other camps was gradually resumed.

In February operations continued as before, and the main concern was the laying of the sanitary infrastructure in the camps in preparation for the coming monsoon, in order to avoid the epidemics which might arise among a large concentration of people in the absence of strict measures of hygiene.

In the medical sphere, problems of malnutrition are diminishing, no doubt as a result of the intensive care administered by the many medical teams over the last few months. The improvement of general health among the Cambodians having sought refuge in Thailand has led the ICRC to start phasing out its medical set-up. The medical teams whose contracts expire are not being replaced.

Referring to another aspect of relief work, we would mention that the delegates of the Central Tracing Agency in Thailand, in a single month, registered more than 150,000 Cambodians in the Khao I Dang, Sakaeo and Kamput camps. The data has now been stored in a computer and will make for the rapid tracing of many persons and reuniting of dispersed families in liaison with the CTA in Geneva and the tracing services of various National Societies in countries which have for years been accepting Cambodian refugees.

Afghanistan

On 22 January an ICRC delegation comprising Mr. Jacques Moreillon, director of the Principles and Law Department, Mr. Dominique

Borel, regional delegate, and Dr. H. W. Jaun, medical delegate, went to Kabul to confer with the Government and Afghan Red Crescent on humanitarian problems caused by recent events.

The following day the three ICRC representatives, accompanied by the Secretary-General of the National Society, were received in audience by Mr. Babrak Karmal, President of the Revolutionary Council and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan. They also met the Minister of the Interior.

Following these talks, the Afghan Government gave the ICRC a firm assurance that it would in all circumstances respect the principles of the 1949 Geneva Conventions to which Afghanistan is a party, and in particular that all armed forces on Afghan territory would respect their obligations under the Conventions.

In addition, the ICRC was given authorization to visit regularly and without witnesses all political and "security" prisoners and other persons captured during fighting. The ICRC delegation was informed that, on 23 January, there were 57 political prisoners in Afghanistan and no prisoners taken during the fighting.

The ICRC delegation and the Afghan authorities agreed to organize, in co-operation with the National Society, a relief programme for the civilian population affected by the events and a joint ICRC-Afghan Red Crescent tracing office for the transmission of family messages to and from relatives outside the country.

At the end of January Mr. Nicolas Vecsey, assistant director of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency in Geneva, went to Kabul to work out with the Afghan Red Crescent practical arrangements for such action.

On 6 and 7 February the ICRC delegate and doctor visited the Puli Charkhi prison near Kabul, where they saw 42 political detainees.

Following the events which occurred in Kabul at the end of January, the ICRC delegates again approached the authorities in order to gain access to the persons arrested. The ICRC also offered to send medicaments and, if necessary, medical teams, in order to assist the civilian population.

Pakistan

With a view to helping about 500,000 destitute Afghan refugees to face the harsh winter conditions in the mountains of Pakistan, the

International Red Cross, on 30 January 1980, launched an appeal for 14.5 million Swiss francs. The money will be handed to the Pakistan Red Crescent to enable it to participate in the relief operations being supervised by the Pakistan Government.

The Pakistan Red Crescent relief programme, devised with the assistance of the League of Red Cross Societies and of the ICRC, is to provide emergency aid to some 100,000 refugees for a year. For that purpose the National Society has immediate need of large quantities of medical supplies, tents, blankets, quilts, clothing and footwear, stoves for cooking, soap, vehicles, petrol and other relief goods.

The International Red Cross appeal is additional to that which the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) launched on 16 January.

About 80 per cent of the Afghan refugees now in Pakistan are in the North-West Frontier Province, the remainder in Baluchistan.

Mid-February an ICRC delegate and doctor on the spot started working in close co-operation with League delegates to initiate the National Society's relief programme.

The ICRC having been called upon to provide medical assistance, Dr. Georges Muheim has recruited local medical personnel to form two mobile teams for work in the North-West Frontier Province. Equipped with the necessary vehicles and supplies, they will tend refugees in a dozen camps where dispensaries have been set up under canvas. Medical supplies have been stocked at Peshawar.

One of the vehicles used by the teams is a heavy-duty ambulance with full equipment. It was donated to the ICRC by the Geneva Motor Show on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary.

Burma/Thailand

The ICRC Vice-President, Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, was in Burma and Thailand during the first fortnight of January.

In Rangoon, as the guest of the Burmese authorities, Mr. Pestalozzi was received by the Head of State, President Ne Win. He also conferred with the leaders of the Burma Red Cross. This visit to Burma—the first by a member of the ICRC for ten years—enabled the ICRC Vice-

President to speak on the institution's activities throughout the world and to strengthen links with the National Society.

Mr. Pestalozzi then went to Thailand where he had various discussions with government officials and with the Thai Red Cross. In Bangkok he also met the representatives of a number of humanitarian organizations taking part in the assistance operations for the benefit of refugees from Kampuchea (e.g. UNICEF, HCR, WFP and voluntary agencies). Mr. Pestalozzi went to the border region where he saw the work being carried out in the field to provide food and medical assistance, and the operations of the Tracing Agency.

Indochinese refugees

The fourth meeting of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the refugee problem in South-East Asia took place in Singapore on 4 and 5 February 1980. The meeting concluded with the adoption of a 12 million Swiss francs budget for the six-month period from 1 February to 31 July 1980.

This budget reflects the determination of the Societies, whether operator or donor, to take every possible step to alleviate the suffering of tens of thousands of people seeking permanent asylum. This budget does not include the cost of operations in Thailand for the refugees from Kampuchea. The Thai Red Cross relief action, which is part of the overall effort undertaken in that country, is included in the budget managed jointly by the ICRC and UNICEF.

The Red Cross efforts are in addition to the programmes established for several months by various national agencies or international organizations such as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

During the meeting the eight Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies operating in the region (China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macao, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) asked for continuous support for their emergency actions and expressed their gratitude to the international community for its generous help in the last few years.

In the course of the meeting, organized by the League and the ICRC and hosted by the Singapore Red Cross, the representatives of seventeen countries voiced their extreme concern for refugees who fall into the

hands of pirates. They hoped that the vigorous action taken by authorities concerned would ensure protection for these defenceless people.

On 5 March the League and the ICRC appealed to governments and National Societies to finance the above-mentioned activities according to the budget worked out in Singapore.

Middle East

Israel and occupied territories

The ICRC delegation for Israel and the occupied territories continued visiting detainees undergoing interrogation. This activity being continuous, *International Review* does not give an account of it in every issue.

Several transfers of persons took place in January and February through the intermediary of the ICRC between Israel or the occupied territories and the neighbouring Arab countries.

On 21 January a national of Sri Lanka who had crossed by boat into Israel in the Aqaba region was transferred to Jordan. The boat had been returned by the ICRC on 14 January. Two other infiltrators were handed over to the Jordanian authorities on 13 and 18 February.

On 18 February two Lebanese detainees released by the Israeli authorities were repatriated through Rosh Hanikra (Ras Nakura).

Lebanon

To assist the civilian victims of the fighting which occurred on 12 February in northern Lebanon, the ICRC undertook, with the co-operation of the Lebanese Red Cross, an action of protection and assistance. Food, blankets and other relief goods were distributed to the stricken families and an ICRC nurse was sent to that district to tend the wounded. Dispensaries in the region were supplied with medicaments at the same time.

Simultaneously the ICRC organized the transfer of a child to a Beirut hospital for an operation.

On 20 February an ICRC team and teams of National Society volunteers reached the village of Knat, where the inhabitants had been cut off for several days by the fighting. The delegates conveyed 30 civilians, 17 of them children, to reception centres. They also buried two villagers and brought the body of a combatant back to Beirut.

Iran

Since 24 January a series of visits to places of detention has been in progress in Iran. From 24 to 30 January two delegates visited the Evin prison in Teheran, where there were 800 detainees.

In February an ICRC delegate went to the provinces to continue the series of visits. He saw about 500 detainees in the prisons of Tabriz and Kermanshah.
