

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Accessions to Protocols

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania on 6 February, the Gabonese Republic on 20 February, and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on 6 March 1980 sent the Swiss Government their instruments of accession to the two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, adopted in Geneva on 8 June 1977.

These instruments were recorded on 14 March, 8 April and 10 April 1980. The Protocols, according to their provisions, will come into force six months after those dates, i.e.

for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania on 14 September 1980;
for the Gabonese Republic on 8 October 1980; and
for the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on 10 October 1980.

These new accessions bring the number of States parties to Protocol I to fourteen, and those parties to Protocol II to thirteen.

Queen Elizabeth II at the ICRC

During their State visit to Switzerland, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and H. R. H. Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on 30 April. The royal couple were accompanied by Federal Councillor Mr. Pierre Aubert and Mrs. Aubert.

The Queen and Prince Philip and their suite were welcomed by the President of the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva, Mr. Guy Fontanet, by the Mayor of Geneva, Mr. Roger Dafflon, and

by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay. Among the eminent persons presented to Her Majesty were the General Directors of several international intergovernmental organizations, officials of the Canton and of the Municipality of Geneva and of the League of Red Cross Societies and members of the ICRC.

Queen Elizabeth is Patron and President of the British Red Cross Society, one of the oldest National Societies of our movement, founded in 1869, when Queen Victoria consented to be its Patron and the Prince of Wales its President.

Relations between the ICRC and the British Government go back further still, as Great Britain was represented at the Diplomatic Conferences of 1863 and 1864 when the foundations of the Red Cross movement were laid.

In his address, the ICRC President referred to those events and continued as follows:

“... Relations between the ICRC and the United Kingdom have always been close and marked with confidence. From the foundation of the Red Cross movement, and during the 117 years of its existence, the British Government and Red Cross have unfailingly given us moral, diplomatic and material support.

At this very moment about 700 delegates—including British Red Cross medical teams—in 47 delegations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, are working to protect, assist and give medical care to the victims of some 30 armed conflicts or crises. In addition, protection has been extended in recent years to people termed “political detainees” in 77 States.

All these activities must be financed and it gives me pleasure to say, Madam, that Your Government and the British Red Cross have often contributed most generously, in keeping with the great British tradition of voluntary selfless service for one's neighbour in distress. Your great nation, under the leadership of its Sovereigns and of members of the Royal Family, has given us splendid examples of international solidarity.

I pray most earnestly that the ties which link the United Kingdom to our institution will draw us ever closer together, and that those excellent relations will contribute still further to alleviate the distress from which so many people suffer on this earth, and to develop the spirit of Peace among all nations.”

After having received a small memento of her visit, the first ever made to the ICRC by a reigning monarch of the United Kingdom, Her Majesty signed the Visitors' Book and examined with marked interest a

selection of documents from the records of the Central Tracing Agency. Before leaving, she greeted a crowd of several hundred, mainly British residents, who had gathered in the grounds of the ICRC.

In Berne, at an official reception of the Swiss Government, Queen Elizabeth spoke highly of the Red Cross:

“Throughout the world, the name of Switzerland is synonymous with charity and a deep concern for humanity. And with good reason. Wherever in the world there is distress, whether it is caused by earthquake, flood or man-made disaster, we can be sure to find abundant evidence of Swiss compassion. How fitting it was that a Swiss citizen, Henry Dunant, should have been the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize; and that the organization which he founded and which has itself been awarded the Prize three times, should have as its symbol the Swiss flag with inverted colours: a red cross. Many of my people will remember all their lives the help they received from the Red Cross during the last war...”

A bust of Henry Dunant in Geneva

A bust of Henry Dunant was inaugurated in Geneva on 2 June. It stands at the entrance to the old town. It is a sober and elegant work representing Dunant in the prime of life and was sculptured by Luc Jaggi, a Genevese artist who died a few years ago. The base bears the following simple inscription: “Henry Dunant, 1828-1910, founder of the Red Cross”.

The initiative of erecting a monument to Dunant in his birthplace was taken by a group of his fellow-citizens led by Pastor Babel and Doctor Geisendorf. The group collected the necessary funds for purchasing and erecting the bust. All participants are to be congratulated and thanked for having carried out this welcome project.

The ICRC was represented by Mr. Jean Pictet at the ceremony on 2 June when this work of art was offered to the City of Geneva.