

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Chad

The ICRC delegation in Chad was re-opened in N'Djamena on 1 March 1981. Previously, since December 1980, the delegates working in N'Djamena had to cross over to Kousseri on the Cameroon side of the Chari River every evening, for safety.

As the ICRC is at present the only humanitarian organization performing any kind of activity in Chad, its delegation had to do work it does not normally tackle. Among the major and most urgent tasks that had to be carried out once fighting had ceased, the town of N'Djamena had to be cleaned and the drinking water supply system had to be got working again.

The ICRC delegates next organized food aid for 15,000 needy families, and supplied medicaments and medical material for the hospitals and dispensaries in N'Djamena and in the rest of the country. Assistance was also provided for the leper colony, whose village not far from the capital had been completely wiped out in the course of the fighting. All those activities were undertaken in close co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the "Chad Red Cross" now being set up.

The Central Tracing Agency is continuing its tasks: search for missing persons and transmission of messages between members of dispersed families. The problem of former prisoners of war, whose homes are in the south of Chad but who are stranded in the north, is still a matter of major concern.

From 19 to 27 March, three ICRC delegates carried out a survey in the south of Chad, where they found there were large concentrations of displaced persons. Because of the combats in 1980, the land had not been sown, and food had become scarce. Although some of the medical personnel had not fled, the dispensaries and smaller provincial hospitals

had run out of medicaments. Emergency medical supplies were distributed by the ICRC delegates in the course of their mission, and a plan was drawn up to supply the health centres in the area. Permission was also obtained to set up a regional distribution centre of pharmaceutical supplies in Moundou.

In April, many civilian and military casualties were reported in renewed outbreaks of fighting in the Abéché region in east Chad. But, for safety reasons, the ICRC could not send any of its delegates to the area and it was not possible to provide the aid required during that emergency period.

Uganda

In March and April, ICRC delegates in Uganda continued to provide protection and assistance for the civilian population in the West Nile Province. The protection tasks consisted in a series of visits to places of detention where, between 23 January and 11 March, they saw some 5,800 prisoners in ten prisons.

Assistance was provided in the form of over 20 tons of relief goods distributed in March; of this amount, about ten tons went to displaced persons in the West Nile Province and in the East Mahdi region, and ten tons to different prisons in Uganda, for the detainees.

From 19 to 25 March, Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, who was recently appointed delegate general for Africa, and Mr. Didier Helg, delegate, visited Uganda. The purpose of the delegate general's visit was to get into contact with the Ugandan authorities and the National Red Cross leaders and, also, to make a survey of the situation with the ICRC delegation there.

In Kampala, Mr. Bornet had a number of meetings with government ministers and senior officials, including the Vice-President of Uganda, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Commissioner for Prisons. The delegates also spent two days in the West Nile Province, where they saw ICRC activities in the field.

Ethiopia

From 9 March to 9 April, the ICRC's deputy chief medical officer, Dr. D. Allgöwer, and a delegate from the ICRC delegation in Addis Ababa, Mr. Farine, were on a survey mission in four provinces affected by conflict or by drought. Representatives of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, a government body which co-ordinates aid to the camps sheltering displaced persons, accompanied the two ICRC delegates

to the provinces of Balé, Hararge, Eritrea and Tigré. They were able to assess on the spot the living conditions of the persons needing assistance and to revise food and medical aid programmes in relation to developments in the situation. It was found that material relief supplies were still needed, but that the mobile medical team, which was operating in Balé Province with ICRC funds, could be withdrawn, as the local medical infrastructure, under the control of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission and of the National Red Cross Society, was now in a satisfactory state. ICRC medical aid could therefore be restricted in future to supplying medicaments for hospitals and dispensaries in the area.

As part of its joint aid programme with the Ethiopian Red Cross, the ICRC has been providing the foodstuffs, medicaments, clothing and blankets distributed by Ethiopian aid bodies (the National Red Cross Society and the Commission referred to above).

Relief handed over by the ICRC from the beginning of January 1981 to mid-April amounted to 295 tons to a value of about 300,000 dollars.

Angola

In March and April 1981, the ICRC continued its aid programme for displaced persons in the Planalto region in Angola. It was decided, however, on 2 May, that ICRC teams based in Huambo should no longer travel through the regions of Bailundo and Katchiungo, the main reason being because these areas were considered to be unsafe. This temporary suspension of ICRC aid was decided immediately after about 40 tons of relief (mostly food) had been distributed to some 11,000 persons during preceding weeks.

In March, an airlift was organized between Francistown (Botswana) and Huambo. A dozen flights were made from 9 to 26 March, bringing each time about 20 tons of relief supplies and some vehicles. The cost of the operation was 610,000 Swiss francs.

The delegate-general for Africa, Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, carried out a mission in Angola from 13 to 25 May, with the purpose of making a re-assessment of ICRC activities in this country and organizing them in such a way as to allow its delegates to perform their tasks safely. Plans are under consideration to extend ICRC action to displaced persons in areas which assistance has not yet reached.

Mozambique

The authorities in Mozambique had requested the ICRC, in its capacity as a neutral intermediary, to take part in an operation for the repatriation of the body of a South African soldier killed in Mozambique.

The repatriation took place under ICRC auspices on 30 March when the mortal remains were flown from Mozambique's capital, Maputo, to South Africa. This was the first time an operation of this kind had been carried out between the two countries with ICRC help.

Lesotho

ICRC contacts with the Government and National Red Cross Society of Lesotho were resumed when the ICRC delegate stationed in Maputo (Mozambique) went to Maseru from 3 to 8 May 1981. Among the government ministers and officials with whom he conferred were the Minister of Justice and Prisons, the official for international organizations at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's office. The ICRC delegate also met National Red Cross leaders.

The authorization to visit places of detention in Lesotho was granted in principle to the ICRC. The question of organizing a round table meeting on international humanitarian law was put forward and was favourably greeted by the authorities and the National Red Cross Society.

South Africa

The head of the ICRC delegation in South Africa, accompanied by a relief delegate, went on a brief mission to the Transkei. On 16 and 20 May, they met the Prime Minister. They also had talks with the military authorities and the local Red Cross.

Several points relating to ICRC activities, the principles of the Red Cross and international humanitarian law were discussed.

Latin America

Argentina

In March and April, the ICRC delegation in Argentina visited seven places of detention holding persons detained for security reasons. The visits were fully and comprehensively carried out in accordance with standard ICRC procedures.

Nicaragua

In March and April, the ICRC delegates in Nicaragua continued their visits to places of detention and the provision of aid to detainees and their families.

In the course of those two months, eight visits were made to six places of detention in Managua and other parts of the country.

In the first three months of 1981, the ICRC delegation distributed food and medicaments to a value of over 100,000 dollars.

Fifteen detainees, who were old or sick, and for whom the ICRC had asked the authorities to show clemency, were released in March.

El Salvador

The ICRC continued its protection and assistance tasks in El Salvador, despite the tension that prevailed in many parts of the country, arising from the armed clashes. The troubled situation restricted the movements of the ICRC and National Red Cross Society, who were unable to bring any aid to certain areas for about seven weeks in the first quarter of 1981.

The ICRC and the National Society are carrying out a relief action in the north and centre from San Salvador, and in the east from San Miguel. Relief supplies transported in convoys are distributed by the National Society under the supervision, in most cases, of the ICRC relief delegate.

In mid-April, it became possible to send Red Cross relief convoys once again to the department of Morazan. By the end of April, only the Chalatenango region in the north could not be reached. In the district of San Miguel, in the south-east, ICRC and National Society convoys carried relief goods which were distributed in the last week of April to 17,500 displaced persons sheltering in five villages.

In the first three months of 1981, despite difficult working conditions, over 17 tons of relief goods were distributed in the central and northern areas of El Salvador, and more than 240 tons in the east (WFP gifts and ICRC purchases). In addition, 2,000 blankets were supplied.

Medical assistance is provided in the centre of El Salvador by a mobile unit of the Salvadorian Red Cross, and in the east by an ICRC mobile medical unit.

Mr. Ph. Dind, head of the ICRC Relief Division went on a mission to El Salvador from 24 April to 3 May. He met the Ministers of Interior and Planning, the President of the Red Cross of El Salvador, and representatives of WFP and other aid bodies.

The talks with government representatives were centred mainly on the co-ordination of assistance, and on the development of the general situation.

In the field of protection, visits to places of detention in San Salvador and other towns continued. In March and April, ICRC delegates visited 102 places of detention.

Dissemination campaign

Since November 1980, the ICRC has been conducting with the Salvadorian Red Cross an intensive dissemination campaign. In the permanent state of violence which reigns in El Salvador, it is important to get the humanitarian message across to the people: both to persuade those fighting each other to respect the civilian population and all those who do not take part in the combats, and to ensure respect for the Red Cross emblem, and for the personnel working under the sign of the red cross.

There are two main aspects to this information campaign. First, it has been directed to the general public, by means of radio, television, posters and articles in the press. Secondly, lectures on the Principles of the Red Cross and international humanitarian law have been organized for members of the armed forces and of the police.

It was for that purpose that Mr. R. Gaillard-Moret, head of the Documentation and Dissemination Division of the ICRC, undertook, from 6 April, a mission among the armed forces which will last for about two months.

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The Salvadorian Red Cross Blood Collection Centre was officially opened in San Salvador on 8 May, World Red Cross Day. This was the crowning event of a joint project of the ICRC and National Red Cross Society. The ICRC supplied the laboratory equipment and has undertaken to pay all working expenses of the Centre for one year.

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Early in June, the ICRC learnt with shock of the murder of one of its Salvadorian employees, Mr. Carlos Mandredi Hernandez, a storekeeper at the ICRC warehouse at San Miguel. The full circumstances surrounding the murder have not yet been determined.

With the tragic death of Mr. Hernandez, still another name has been added to the long list of victims in El Salvador. Deeply affected by this crime, the ICRC made an earnest appeal for the absolute respect of the

civilian population, of the Red Cross personnel and its humanitarian mission. The ICRC conveyed its deep sympathy to Mr. Hernandez' family.

Bolivia

The ICRC regional delegate for the Andean countries carried out a mission in Bolivia from 17 February to 20 March. He went to eleven places of detention, four of them for the first time.

Colombia

Mr. Kobel, ICRC regional delegate for the Andean countries, arrived in Colombia on 21 April, and he visited first the Colombian Red Cross. He gave several lectures on the dissemination of international humanitarian law to the National Society senior officials.

He also had talks with the Minister for Defence, who granted the ICRC authorization to visit persons detained by the military authorities. Visits to places of detention under the authority of the army began in May. Authorization was also granted by the Minister of Justice, allowing the ICRC to visit prisons under his Ministry's authority.

Haiti

On 27 April Mr. Kobel arrived in Haiti. He was received in audience by the President of the Republic, Mr. Jean-Claude Duvalier, who granted the ICRC the authorization to visit places of detention in Haiti.

From 29 April to 6 May, the regional delegate accordingly visited the national penitentiary at Port-au-Prince, where he saw 683 detainees, 52 of whom had been imprisoned for political reasons. He also went to two other places of detention holding 27 penal law prisoners.

The ICRC also met the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice, National Defence and Education, with whom subjects of common interest concerning ICRC activities were reviewed.

Asia

Kampuchea

In Kampuchea, from 16 to 26 March, ICRC delegates, including the head of delegation and the medical co-ordinator, carried out in the provinces around Tonlé Sap a survey of the health and medical situation

of the population. The team went to the provinces of Kompong Chhannng, Pursat, Battambang, Kompong Thom and Kompong Cham. Everywhere it went, it visited village and district dispensaries and hospitals. Although the general situation seems distinctly better than in previous months, it nevertheless remains hazardous, especially for the children. It appeared necessary for the ICRC to continue supplying hospitals with medicines and basic medical equipment during 1981.

The gradual withdrawal of the ICRC medical teams began. Until the end of March, there had been four such teams. In mid-April, the teams supplied by the Soviet and Hungarian National Societies left Kampuchea; the Swedish and Polish medical teams will stay on until the end of June.

On 2 June, a small boy left Phnom Penh aboard an ICRC aircraft to rejoin his parents in France. This was the culmination of six years of negotiation by the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC, the parents having approached the Agency in April 1975 to trace their child.

Thailand

The phasing out of the ICRC medical organization along the Khmero-Thai frontier, initiated at the beginning of the year, continued in March and April, taking into account the known needs and the possibility of Voluntary Agencies' working in this region. At the end of April, there were only two ICRC medical teams in the vicinity of Aranyaprathet. In addition, the ICRC retained responsibility for the surgical team of the Scandinavian Red Cross Societies, working in the HCR camp of Khao-I-Dang.

During the first quarter of 1981, ICRC medical and surgical assistance on the frontier was considerable: between 1 January and 11 March, over 12,000 consultations were given in hospitals and dispensaries of the refugee camps; the value of the medical supplies to the various teams amounted to nearly 400,000 Swiss francs; nearly 1,800 patients were admitted to hospital, a high proportion suffering from war wounds inflicted by mines or bullets.

In addition, the ICRC delegates carried on with their relief activities for some 2,800 Vietnamese refugees who, having crossed Kampuchea, are now assembled in the "NW9" camp.

Indonesia

From 22 February to 23 April, five ICRC delegates, including a doctor and an interpreter, visited 247 detained persons convicted for

having been involved in the attempted coup d'état of 1965; they are held in 26 civilian prisons on the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali, Sulawesi (Celebes), the Moluccas and Kalimantan (Borneo).

With the agreement of the authorities, relief supplies (soap, blankets, mosquito nets, books and spectacles) were purchased by the delegates in each of the 26 places visited and handed over by them personally to the beneficiaries. In all, 27,000 Swiss francs were used for these purchases, representing an average of over 70 Swiss francs per detainee.

These detainees are now all subject to the Ministry of Justice and in mid-May the delegates submitted their comments on the visits, together with their conclusions and recommendations, to the authorities concerned in Djakarta.

The ICRC first began visiting this category of detainees in 1970; it visited them again in 1974/75, then in 1977/78 and again in 1979.

Timor

The joint aid programme of the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross on behalf of the destitute in East Timor came to an end on 15 April. However, until the end of 1981, the ICRC will continue to supervise the use of stocks of emergency supplies still available: approximately 500 tons, or 30 tons per village assisted. In addition, it will supply the Indonesian Red Cross with medicines and some financial support to ensure the continuation of medical programmes in some villages. Plans are also being made to set up an agency bureau on Timor, within the Indonesian Red Cross, for the purpose of tracing missing persons and reuniting families separated between Timor and Portugal. Furthermore, the ICRC hopes to develop its protection activities in places of detention in East Timor.

From the beginning of the programme, in October 1979, up to mid-April 1981, 14 villages with a total of over 80,000 persons, have benefited from the joint aid of the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross. Three of these villages received only medical aid.

Food relief—6,420 tons of provisions bought locally or from abroad—was distributed by the Red Cross in the assisted villages. In the medical field, mobile teams treated on average 500 patients per day for various illnesses (malnutrition, skin diseases, respiratory infections, malaria). Special treatment was used to combat serious malnutrition, tuberculosis and filariasis.

In order to facilitate a return to normal living conditions, a special programme was undertaken to recreate and restock poultry farms and fish breeding grounds. In 23 localities (including villages not benefiting

from the joint aid programmes) 4,400 chickens and 800 ducks were distributed and approximately 12,000 fish were released in the reserves of 13 other centres.

The personnel made available for this programme totalled 286 people: from the ICRC, three doctors and four delegates and, from the Indonesian Red Cross, 12 employees, 13 doctors, 35 nurses and over 200 volunteers.

Six people (two adults and four children) left Timor on 14 April to rejoin close relatives in Portugal. A delegate from the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC accompanied them from Zurich to Lisbon.

Philippines

At the end of March, the ICRC regional delegate for south-east Asia, Mr. J. F. Olivier, accompanied by the Relief Director of the Philippine Red Cross, carried out a survey on the island of Pata to the south-west of Mindanao, where part of the population is displaced on account of the disturbances.

This mission made it possible to establish that the allocation of food relief, which the ICRC planned to send to the National Society for 1981, should be enough to provide sufficient assistance to the inhabitants of the island. The ICRC contributes to the relief programme of the Philippine Red Cross for approximately 40,000 displaced persons.

Throughout 1980, the ICRC delegates conducted several series of visits to places of detention in the Philippines. They made a total of 32 visits in Philippine places of detention.

Pakistan

On 23 April, the ICRC launched an international appeal for 4.8 million Swiss francs to finance its medical assistance programmes for Afghan refugees in ten camps in Kurram and North Waziristan in north-west Pakistan.

This sum will be used primarily to cover the costs of running an ICRC hospital which will be inaugurated in June at Peshawar and where a dozen doctors and nurses provided by Red Cross National Societies will work with Pakistani personnel.

The hospital will treat patients from refugee camps and will also serve as a base for the mobile medical teams of the ICRC working in the dispensaries of the two regions mentioned. These mobile medical teams are composed of Pakistani and Afghan personnel under the responsibility of an ICRC doctor.

Middle East

Lebanon

In Lebanon, the situation began to get worse in March and deteriorated still further at the beginning of April. Violent fighting in Beirut and other parts of the country necessitated emergency action by the ICRC and the Lebanese Red Cross.

One of the first steps was to organize relief convoys to the besieged town of Zahle, in the Bekaa plain, to bring supplies for hospitals and dispensaries and to evacuate the wounded.

By 23 April, the thirteen Red Cross convoys that had been sent into Zahlé, had brought in altogether 500 kg of medicaments for the local hospitals and dispensaries and had carried to safety on their way back over 200 persons, including 50 wounded and 50 children who had been separated from their parents.

In Beirut, too, the ICRC took several wounded people to hospitals. About 6,000 families who had fled Beirut towards Jounieh received food and blankets provided by the ICRC. The fighting had intensified so much that the ICRC delegation had to re-open its offices in Jounieh.

In south Lebanon, an ICRC doctor and nurse made a survey of the medical supplies that would be required as a result of the combats in the area. In April, food, blankets and medicaments were distributed in Tyre, Sidon, Marjayoun and other places.

On 3 April, three voluntary workers from the Lebanese Red Cross lost their lives when their vehicle was caught in cross-fire and crashed after leaving the road. Deeply affected by this tragic event, and also by the large number of victims caused by recent combats, the ICRC President, who was at the time in Amman chairing a seminar on the dissemination of international humanitarian law, appealed to the parties involved in the fighting to respect the fundamental principles of humanity and to spare people's lives.

In order to be operative on the entire territory of Lebanon and with the many parties to the conflict, the ICRC dispatched extra personnel and medical relief from Geneva. On 2 May, a special aircraft chartered by the ICRC was given permission to land at Beirut, at a period when the airport had been closed to ordinary traffic. The aircraft carried Mr. Jean Hoefliger, ICRC delegate-general for the Middle East, four other delegates and nine tons of emergency medical supplies. It flew back to Geneva that same day, taking a wounded person who was later transported to Paris.

On 13 April, the ICRC launched an appeal for six million Swiss francs to the international community to obtain the necessary financial means for the continuation of its work in Lebanon. This amount is needed to cover the ICRC's operations over the next five months (hospitals and dispensaries throughout Lebanon to be supplied, an emergency surgical unit to be set up, the Central Tracing Agency's tasks to be reactivated) and to raise the number of its personnel to 20 delegates and 35 local staff.

Israel and occupied territories

From February to April, the ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories carried out over 650 visits to detainees under interrogation in the Gaza and Jerusalem sectors. During the same period, they continued their customary visits to places of detention holding detainees arrested on an administrative order: eight prisons were visited in March and five in April.

In addition, during March and April, the ICRC delegation at Tel-Aviv, arranged for the transfer of several persons, with the co-operation of the delegations at Amman, Beirut and Damascus. On 5 March, a Syrian national, who had illegally entered Israel on 4 February, was returned to Syria via Kuneitra; on 23 and 30 April, two Lebanese were taken back to Lebanon through the frontier post at Roshanikra (Ras Nakura); and three separate repatriation operations were organized at Allenby Bridge, on 13, 16 and 30 April, for five persons to be sent back to Jordan.

Jordan

In March and April, ICRC delegates in Jordan made two visits to a place of detention under the authority of the General Intelligence Department. They saw there 28 detainees under interrogation in March, and 19 in April, and spoke with them, as customary, without witness. In April, these prisoners were authorized for the first time to write to their families.

Arab Republic of Egypt

The ICRC delegate in Cairo was in Sinai from 8 to 12 March and made a survey of the conditions under which the civilians were living in the centre and north of Sinai. Among the areas visited were Meghara, Rissan, Jifafah, Nakhel and Bir Hasana.

Iraq-Iran conflict

ICRC President's mission in Iraq

ICRC President Alexandre Hay, accompanied by the delegate-general for the Middle East, Mr. Jean Hoefliger, was in Iraq from 29 March to 4 April.

While in Baghdad, Mr. Hay conferred with Mr. Saadoun Hammadi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Tarek Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister. During these talks, which concerned mainly the practical procedures for the application of the Geneva Conventions, Mr. Hay's interlocutors re-affirmed their Government's determination to observe strictly its treaty obligations.

Iraq

The ICRC's protection activities in Iraq were pursued in March and April and more visits by ICRC delegates to Iranian prisoners of war were carried out. President Hay accompanied ICRC delegates when they visited Mosul camp on 30 March and 1 April.

Iran

ICRC delegates in Iran continued, in March and April, to provide protection and assistance to the victims of the conflict between Iraq and Iran.

Visits to Iraqi prisoners of war continued to be made by the delegates, who visited four camps they had already seen previously. In mid-March, they visited a fifth camp, which had been recently opened.

In addition, the ICRC was given permission by the Minister of the Interior to visit Iranian detainees in the hands of the Islamic Revolutionary Committees. The authorization was granted for one year, as from 21 April 1981. As this latest development in the ICRC's protection activities called for additional personnel to work in the delegation, two more delegates arrived in Teheran at the end of April.

The first visits began at the end of April to detainees in several "committees" in the capital as well as in the provinces. The ICRC delegates also visited the prison at Tabriz, where they saw altogether 850 political detainees, and nine other places of detention.

Europe

Turkey

The new ICRC delegate-general for Europe and North America, Mr. Frank Schmidt, made a short visit to Turkey from 23 to 25 March. In Ankara, he met the directors of the Turkish Red Crescent and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Discussions were mainly concerned with the activities and financing of the ICRC, and with the possible ratification by Turkey of the 1977 Protocols.

Poland

From 7 to 9 April, Mr. Frank Schmidt, accompanied by Miss F. Perret, from the ICRC Documentation and Dissemination Division, was in Warsaw.

Mr. Schmidt visited the National Red Cross Society and its installations and took part in working meetings at its headquarters. He was introduced to the Polish authorities and had a discussion with the Deputy Foreign Minister.
