

The President of the French Republic visits the ICRC

The President of the Republic of France, Mr François Mitterrand, visited on June 2 the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross during his stay in Geneva. Mr Mitterrand was accompanied by Mrs Nicole Questiaux, Minister of National Solidarity, and Mr Jean Auroux, Minister of Labour. He was welcomed by the ICRC's President, Mr Alexandre Hay, and a former ICRC President, Mr Marcel Naville, together with members of the ICRC's Directorate. Also present were representatives from Geneva authorities and from the League of Red Cross Societies.

After recalling the past century's links between France and the ICRC, Mr Hay gave Mr Mitterrand an outline of the ICRC's current activities.

Visit of Pope John Paul II to the ICRC

Pope John Paul II visited the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva on 15 June 1982, the first visit by a sovereign pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church to the ICRC. He was accompanied by Cardinals A. Casaroli and B. Gantin and numerous other church dignitaries.

The Pope was greeted on his arrival by the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, together with members of the International Committee, the directors of the ICRC, representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies, of the Swiss Red Cross and of the Henry Dunant Institute. Official representatives of the Swiss Confederation, the Republic and Canton of Geneva, the City of Geneva, the United Nations Office in Geneva and the International Labour Office were also present.

In his reply to the ICRC President's greeting, the Pope launched an urgent appeal for "respect for the international humanitarian conventions and additional Protocols by the States and authorities whose function it is to apply their wise provisions. It is the duty of each State, with the welfare of its citizens at heart, to subscribe to them without reservation and to put them into practice."

“Who would not subscribe”, said the Pope, “to the basic principles of the Red Cross, and, in particular, to its promise to protect life, to ensure respect for the human person without discrimination, and to promote mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and a lasting peace among all peoples?”

The Pope then severely criticized torture, “this foul plague on mankind”, and inhuman treatment “which causes humiliation and suffering to the victim and degrades the tormentor”.

Finally, he expressed his satisfaction for the good working relations, already considerable in the field, between the Red Cross and the Catholic voluntary organizations, in assisting people in need, and his appreciation “that the Holy See and the ICRC are in the process of studying ways of greater co-operation in their work for peace”.

For the ICRC, founder of the world Red Cross movement, the Pope’s visit illustrates the will of the Catholic Church and of the Red Cross to protect the dignity of man and to promote human rights throughout the world; it gives rise to hopes for developing co-operation between the Catholic Church and the Red Cross, already evident on numerous occasions, in humanitarian operations and the promotion of peace.

The address of the ICRC President and the speech of the Pope will be printed in the next issue of *International Review*.

Zaire accedes to Protocol I

The Republic of Zaire, on 3 June 1982, deposited an instrument of accession to Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), adopted in Geneva on 8 June 1977.

Pursuant to its provisions, the Protocol will come into force for the Republic of Zaire on 3 December 1982.

With this accession, 23 States are now parties to Protocol I and 20 to Protocol II.