

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

January-February 1983

Africa

Angola

The ICRC's humanitarian action on the central Angolan plateau (the *Planalto*) started again at the end of January, after having been suspended for four months because of the dangerous circumstances.

The decision to begin again was taken after UNITA had been approached several times and a meeting had taken place, on 18 and 19 January, between its President, Mr. Savimbi, accompanied by his assistants, and an ICRC delegation, led by Mr. J.-P. Hocké, the ICRC Director of Operational Activities.

Following on these discussions and after further guarantees of security had been received from UNITA, Mr. J.-M. Bornet, the ICRC Delegate General for Africa, went to Angola, from 2 to 11 February. His main task was to set up, as soon as possible, with the ICRC delegation, a programme for gradually resuming assistance activities on the *Planalto*.

At the invitation of the delegates, nearly 300 *Sobas*, the traditional chiefs of the *Planalto*, met at the ICRC's food centre, near the town of Kuito, in the province of Bié, to describe the condition of the population in their villages. This meeting, at the beginning of February, marked the return of the ICRC to the *Planalto*. The subsequent reopening of the Kuito food centre, in the middle of February, was the first direct ICRC activity on behalf of the displaced population since its action had been suspended at the end of September 1982. By the end of February 1983, this centre was housing nearly 300 persons, from about forty villages. At this period of the year, between the October and April harvests, the most vulnerable groups of the population (young children and their mothers, pregnant women, old people) were beginning to suffer from malnutrition.

In the south of the country, four local ICRC employees, who had been kidnapped on 18 October 1982, in the province of Kunene, and eight persons belonging to the Mongua mission, were released by UNITA on 20 February.

In addition, in January and February, the ICRC sub-delegation in N'Giva continued and intensified its medical and agency work.

Namibia

On 28 and 29 January, four ICRC delegates, including a doctor, again visited the Mariental Camp, where they met 140 persons detained under Proclamation No. 9 issued by the Administrator General (AG 9), and fourteen new Angolan prisoners of war.

Mozambique

Three ICRC delegates, including a doctor, carried out a survey in the provinces of Inhambane, Gaza, Sofala and Manica. This mission, from 17 January to 12 February, on which they were accompanied by the Secretary General of the 'Mozambique Red Cross', enabled them to study the health of the population and the medical infrastructure of these regions, with a view to providing the civilian population with medical and food aid.

Lesotho

The regional delegate in Maputo and an ICRC doctor were in Maseru from 8 to 12 February. The object of their mission was to have talks with the leaders of the National Red Cross Society, and to take up again with the authorities the discussion on questions regarding protection, suspended after twelve sentenced prisoners had been visited in October 1982.

Zambia

The ICRC regional delegate in Harare visited Lusaka, from 21 to 23 February, to have talks with the authorities and organizations concerned in the problem of the Angolan refugees in Zambia, and to discuss with the Zambian Red Cross the dissemination of knowledge of humanitarian law and the principles of the Red Cross.

Ethiopia

The ICRC's protection action, suspended since July 1981, began again in February 1983, after the Ethiopian authorities had decided to authorize

the ICRC to resume its visits to Somali prisoners of war detained in Ethiopia. In February, three ICRC delegates, including a doctor, visited 203 Somali prisoners of war in two places of detention.

On 24 February, a delegate from the ICRC Central Tracing Agency was sent to Addis Ababa to organize tracing work connected with the ICRC's protection activities in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and to assist in the setting up of a tracing section within the Ethiopian Red Cross.

During January and February, the assistance operation, undertaken by the ICRC in collaboration with the Ethiopian Red Cross, concentrated mainly on the provinces of Eritrea and Gondar, where 170 tons of relief were distributed to 37,600 persons.

In addition, the food programme carried out in four Gondar villages for children suffering from malnutrition was extended for another six months. This operation, launched in November 1982 for a trial period of three months, had in fact proved satisfactory judging by the state of its child beneficiaries. In February, the Ministry of Health's rural clinics, which were in charge of distributing relief, were restocked in food by the ICRC.

Special relief delegates were sent to Asmara, Harar and Goba, thereby ensuring the constant presence of the ICRC in the provinces and making it possible to adapt assistance programmes to actual needs and undertake more in-depth training for the personnel of the local branches of the National Society taking part in this relief operation.

Chad

Continuing their visits to places of detention throughout Chad, on 27 and 28 January, the ICRC delegates visited 137 prisoners of war detained at the Abéché prison. On 7 February, they had access to fourteen prisoners in Mongo.

From 11 to 27 February, a team of three ICRC delegates, including a doctor, undertook a tour of the north-east of the country, visiting Biltine, Arada, Kalaït, Oum Chalouba, Dada, Témi, Démi, Ounianga Seghir, Ounianga Kebir and Faya. A total of 78 prisoners of war were seen and various items of relief handed over to each of them.

Blankets, mats and kitchen equipment were also distributed to the places of detention, according to their needs, and an assortment of medicaments and dressings to the dispensaries and infirmaries.

In addition, about thirty family messages were transmitted to the prisoners during the course of these visits.

Zaire

In January, the ICRC delegates visited three places of detention in Kinshasa where they saw and registered 74 detainees, including 58 whom they met for the first time. In February, visits were made to five places of detention, also in the capital, when 67 detainees were seen, including seven for the first time.

During January and February, the delegation's tracing agency received 79 requests for tracings and transmitted 73 family messages.

Twelve lectures were delivered to the armed forces and in schools, seven in January, to an audience of about 900, and five in February to about 500 persons, as part of the information campaign and programme for the dissemination of knowledge of the principles of the Red Cross and international humanitarian law (already mentioned in previous *Reviews*).

Appeal for funds

In January, the ICRC prepared the projects and budgets for its protection and humanitarian assistance programmes to be carried out on the African continent from 1 January to 31 December 1983. In a document entitled "Africa Report and Appeal" and sent to donors providing financial support for operations, the ICRC gave an account of its activities in 1982, with a summary of its objectives for 1983 and an appeal for 76.9 million Swiss francs. Taking into account a balance carried over from 1982, the ICRC needs 72.8 million Swiss francs to continue its tasks in Africa in 1983.

Latin America

El Salvador

The ICRC's assistance action for persons displaced by the events continued in January and February. A renewed outbreak of military activities in the departments of Morazan, Chalatenango and Usulután, from the end of January to the middle of February, somewhat slowed down the ICRC's action in the field, as the delegates were temporarily unable to go to the villages receiving assistance. But, in spite of these drawbacks, 870 tons of relief were distributed, during January and February, to more than 100,000 displaced persons, a figure never previously reached.

After the fighting in the town of Berlin, at the end of January, an ICRC convoy of twenty lorries went there on 6 February, taking food aid and blankets to about 15,000 persons. At the same time, 750 persons had medical examinations or received treatment. On 23 February, the ICRC distributed seventeen tons of food, drinking water and also medicaments in Suchitoto, a town which had also been cut off from the rest of the country for several days. In February, 62,000 persons in the eastern zone alone benefited from twenty-one food distributions, i.e. a record total of 500 tons. In the centre of the country, in addition to distributing relief to 20,000 persons, the delegates undertook surveys of the needs of the villages not yet receiving assistance, but which might soon be included in the current assistance programme.

Medical assistance, carried out with the help of locally recruited medical personnel, continued in the departments of the central and eastern zones of the country. In this latter, a second medical team (1 medical delegate, 2 ICRC nurses plus 2 Salvadoran doctors, 1 medical orderly and 3 or 4 first aiders) began work. Thus, there are now three medical teams taking part in the ICRC's action in El Salvador.

During January and February, ICRC delegates made 215 visits to various El Salvador places of detention; 138 of these visits were made to centres in the provinces, where about twenty new detainees were registered.

During this same period, 62 soldiers of the Government Army were released by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and handed over to the ICRC, who accompanied them to their respective units.

In February, the ICRC began a new series of lectures on the basic principles of the Red Cross and international humanitarian law to local sections of the El Salvador Red Cross. This dissemination programme will also be presented to the armed forces.

Appeal for funds

In January, the ICRC launched an appeal for about 23,500,000 Swiss francs to enable it to continue its humanitarian work in El Salvador throughout the current year.

Once the balance carried over from 1982 is deducted from this amount, the ICRC still needs 21,800,000 Swiss francs for its activities in El Salvador in 1983.

Surinam

From 6 to 9 February, the ICRC regional delegate for the Andean countries visited seventeen persons detained as a result of the events. He

had already seen four of them during his previous mission in November 1982.

Asia

Thailand

Events in Nong Chan

Between 31 January and 5 February, fierce fighting in the vicinity of the Nong Chan refugee camp caused the mass exodus of its 41,000 or so occupants. These refugees were first grouped in two provisional reception centres three and six km to the south of Nong Chan. On 4 February, a shell which exploded near a field hospital killed seven persons and wounded numerous others. The same day, the ICRC launched an appeal to all the parties concerned in order to be able to transfer these refugees to a safer place. The Thai authorities accepted about 21,000 of them on their territory. These were grouped together at a new site called Ang Sila, inside Thailand, to the south-west of Nong Chan. However, this authorization was only temporary and, on 18 February, their transfer to O'Smach, to the north, began. The other 20,000 or so refugees from Nong Chan reached Nong Samet Camp, further north, by their own devices, where they swelled the ranks of the 44,000 persons already there. The humanitarian organizations faced considerable danger during the fighting.

ICRC medical teams and staff of the Thai and other National Societies treated the emergency cases on the spot and evacuated the seriously wounded to the Khao-I-Dang hospital. During the week of 31 January to 6 February, 95 seriously wounded and 21 sick were admitted to Khao-I-Dang from Nong Chan. ICRC medical teams working in this hospital comprised ten doctors and eighteen nurses from the Australian, British, Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, New Zealand and Norwegian National Societies. In addition, a mobile team of three doctors and three nurses dealt with evacuating the wounded in ICRC ambulances from the border zone. So as not to overcrowd Khao-I-Dang, those who were only slightly wounded were treated in field hospitals by personnel from the Thai Red Cross and the 'Médecins sans frontières' organization. Later, these hospitals were set up in Ang Sila.

The new ICRC surgical unit in Kap Cherg, to the north of the border zone, received a great number of wounded from the O'Bok and O'Smach Camps. From 5 January, when the first surgical operation was performed,

to the end of February, 77 patients, including 62 war wounded, were admitted to this hospital.

Geneva Mission

During the last week of February, Dr. Athos Gallino, member of the Committee, and Dr. Rémi Russbach, ICRC Chief Medical Officer, visited Bangkok and the Thai border to survey the situation from the medical point of view.

Transfers of Vietnamese refugees

After the Thai authorities had consented, on 20 December, to the resettlement of the Vietnamese refugees of NW 82 Camp, examination of individual cases of refugees was begun on 30 December, with a view to having them transferred to a safer place. This operation was successfully carried out through the remarkable co-ordination of the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM), with the support of the embassies. From 28 January to 6 February, seven transfers, involving a total of 1,694 persons, were organized from NW 82 Camp to Panat Nikhom, under the auspices of the ICRC. On 9 February, 122 persons, who had not yet been accepted by countries of resettlement, were transferred to Khao-I-Dang and NW 82 Camp was closed. Nevertheless, the ICRC is still concerned about the position of the other Vietnamese refugees on the border, for whom a solution should also be found as soon as possible.

Appeal for funds

The projects and budgets of its protection and humanitarian assistance programmes for Kampuchea and Thailand, for the period 1 January to 31 December 1983, were drawn up by the ICRC. In a document addressed in January 1983 to donors who give financial support to its work, the ICRC presented an account of its 1982 operations, gave an outline of its aims for 1983 and appealed for 16,240,000 Swiss francs (8,550,000 dollars) to enable it to continue its mission in this region.

Pakistan

In February, the ICRC hospital in Peshawar had to cope with an influx of war wounded from Afghanistan. In January 88 wounded Afghans had been admitted there and 147 were received in February. Although theoretically of a capacity of from 80 to 100 beds, this hospital can, nevertheless, accommodate extra patients, for short periods, in beds installed on the balconies, in the corridors and in tents set up in the garden. Forty-seven of the 224 surgical operations performed in February

were foot amputations as a result of frost-bite. The situation had become stable by the end of the month with about a hundred beds occupied.

In February, the ICRC delegation in Peshawar received the visit of Dr. Athos Gallino, member of the Committee, and Dr. Rémi Russbach, ICRC Chief Medical Officer.

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On 14 January, another Soviet citizen, captured in Afghanistan by the Afghan resistance movements, was transferred by the ICRC to Switzerland, bringing the number of Soviet prisoners interned in Switzerland to eight.

Financial appeal

In January, the ICRC published its emergency appeal No. 3 on behalf of the victims of the Afghanistan conflict. The aim of this document was to give a summary of the ICRC's work in 1982 and to explain how the financial means placed at its disposal had been used. The report also contained a forecast of the ICRC's activities in 1983 and an appeal for 7,900,000 Swiss francs to enable it to continue its humanitarian work on behalf of the victims of the Afghan conflict.

Indonesia/East Timor

In January, Mr. J.-P. Hocké, ICRC Director of Operational Activities, went to Indonesia where he had talks with the authorities, especially the Foreign Affairs Minister, and with the leaders of the National Society. In addition to the ICRC's operation in East Timor, they discussed questions concerned with visits to places of detention in Indonesia.

Visits to places of detention

From 20 January to 24 March, a team of four ICRC delegates, including a doctor and an interpreter, undertook a series of visits to sixteen Indonesian places of detention. The delegates met 201 prisoners of the G.30.S/PKI category. The previous visit to Indonesian places of detention took place during the first half of 1981.

Assistance activities in East Timor

During the first fortnight of February, two delegates, one of them a doctor from Geneva, went to East Timor to supervise the smooth running of the assistance programmes and their adjustment to the guidelines drawn up during their previous mission in October-November.

On 5 January, eight persons (three cases of first degree family reunion) flew from East Timor to Lisbon to join their families, under the programme set up by the ICRC in conjunction with the Indonesian, Portuguese and Australian authorities. In February, following on talks, a new draft agreement between the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross was drawn up on family reuniting with Australia and Portugal. Family reuniting involving Australia, accepted at government level, will be dealt with by the Indonesian Red Cross, the ICRC acting as adviser and granting financial aid. The ICRC will handle cases not yet accepted by Australia and all those involving Portugal.

Philippines

Three surveys were carried out in February by ICRC delegates, the first in the province of Surigao Sur, on the Island of Mindanao, the second in the province of Davao, also on the Island of Mindanao, and the third in the eastern part of the Island of Samar.

The province of Surigao Sur, visited for the first time by an ICRC delegate, receives ICRC assistance in the form of food aid for the displaced persons, which is distributed by the local branch of the Philippine Red Cross. In the province of Davao, extra food aid has been forwarded to two towns and also distributed to the displaced persons by the local branch of the Red Cross. In the eastern part of Samar, the same amount of ICRC food aid as was provided in 1982, was distributed by the National Society.

Middle East

Iran/Iraq Conflict

Delegate General's missions

Mr. Jean Hoefliger, ICRC Delegate General for the Middle East, went on mission to Teheran, from 18 to 24 February, during which he had talks with the President of the Parliament, the Foreign Affairs Minister and the General commanding the armed forces. Mr. Hoefliger discussed with them various problems connected with the ICRC's protection activities in the Iran/Iraq conflict, in conformity with its mandate under the Conventions.

The Delegate General went to Baghdad with the same objective, from 25 February to 1 March, where he met Mr. Izzat Ibrahim, the Vice-Prime Minister, and Mr. Tarek Aziz, the Foreign Affairs Minister.

In both these countries, the Government authorities promised that measures would be taken to enable the ICRC to accomplish its mission effectively.

Iran

On 23 February, three teams of ICRC delegates began registering a certain number of Iraqi prisoners of war again. They had had to break off this work, in December 1982, because of the difficulties they encountered in carrying out their mission. Starting also on 23 February, ICRC delegates undertook a complete visit of Karaj Camp.

The Joint Medical Commission, made up of Iranian representatives and ICRC doctors, and responsible, in conformity with the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention, for examining cases of seriously wounded prisoners, with a view to their possible repatriation, also undertook a tour of camps and hospitals: 72 of the 178 cases examined were recommended for repatriation.

Iraq

In January and February, ICRC delegates continued their visits of the Anbar and Ramadi Camps, and of the three camps in Mosul where Iranian prisoners of war are held. In addition, in February, they registered the new prisoners.

Near Ramadi, the ICRC delegates also visited the displaced civilians from the Iranian Kurdistan. This action came within the sphere of activities of the Tracing Agency (forwarding messages, tracing persons, etc.).

Appeal for funds

In January, the ICRC addressed an urgent appeal to donors to obtain the necessary funds for its 1983 activities on behalf of the victims of the Iran/Iraq conflict.

Recalling briefly what it had already done since the outbreak of hostilities between the two countries and summarizing its projects for 1983, the ICRC pointed out that it needed a budget of 11,307,000 Swiss francs in 1983. Added to this was the deficit of 5,988,100 Swiss francs for its 1982 Iran/Iraq action. The ICRC, therefore, launched an urgent appeal to donors for 17,300,000 Swiss francs.

Lebanon

During January and February, the ICRC continued its protection and assistance activities in the Lebanon, where owing to outbursts of violence, the situation remained in a state of uncertainty.

The ICRC was gravely concerned about the Palestinian population in southern Lebanon and made a point of reminding the occupying power of its obligations in conformity with the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding the protection of civilians in occupied territories.

In addition, ICRC delegates regularly visited the Palestinian camps around Sidon (Ain el-Helweh, Miyeh-Miyeh) and Tyre (Rachidiyeh, Bourj Chemali, El-Bass and Kasmieh), in order to supervise the measures taken for ensuring the safety of their occupants.

Visits continued daily to the Insar Camp, near Nabatiyeh (South-Lebanon), where about 5,200 Palestinian, Lebanese and people of other nationalities were still being detained by the Israelis at the end of February. Eleven ICRC delegates, including two doctors, registered the new prisoners, carried out interviews without witnesses, examined the cases of those who might be released, inspected the material and psychological conditions of detention and drew up monthly reports which were handed over to the detaining power. The medical delegates, for their part, drew up lists of sick or wounded prisoners which they submitted to the Israeli authorities, made sure that they received adequate medical treatment and recommended that the serious cases be transferred to hospital. About forty foreign prisoners were released in January and February and escorted to Beirut under the auspices of the ICRC, who handed them over to the diplomatic representatives of the countries of asylum for repatriation. A number of other prisoners were also released on the spot.

In *Israel*, ICRC delegates again visited on 25 February 293 Syrian prisoners of war held by the Israelis, and on 17 January and 3 February saw eight women arrested in the Lebanon and detained in Israel.

In *Syria*, the three Israeli prisoners of war held by the Syrians were seen on 10 January and 14 February.

In addition, on 17 February, the ICRC proposed to the Lebanese authorities that it visit those detained by the Lebanese Army. The Lebanese Government having accepted this offer, discussions were in progress, at the end of February, to draw up the procedures for this action.

In the medical sphere, ICRC delegates undertook numerous surveys in the southern suburbs of Beirut, and in the regions of the Chouf,

Aley, Sidon, Baalbeck and Tripoli. Medicaments and medical equipment were supplied to hospitals and dispensaries according to their needs.

An orthopaedic centre, set up by the ICRC in the Moslem orphanage in Sidon, became operational on 14 February. About sixty persons who had had limbs amputated were already enrolled by that date to receive prostheses. Moreover, the ICRC had given the Lebanese Red Cross 200 wheelchairs for distribution.

In January and February, the ICRC supplied non-medical relief, i.e. blankets, milk powder, soap, food parcels, etc., to some 4,800 needy families. In addition, 150 tons of miscellaneous equipment, including tents and lorries, were stored in Limassol (Cyprus), from where they could be sent swiftly to any region in the Lebanon in case of need.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that the tracing agency office in the ICRC delegation in Beirut forwarded a monthly average of 60,000 family messages between the Lebanon and other countries. In January and February, it registered respectively 146 and 63 requests to trace persons separated from their families.

Appeal for funds

In January, the ICRC launched an urgent appeal for funds for its humanitarian work in the Lebanon.

In this document, the ICRC summarized its activities in the Lebanon since June 1982 and set out its objectives for successfully carrying out its protection (visits to prisoners, tracing of missing persons, etc.) and assistance activities (emergency medical aid, food aid, etc.), in 1983. The budget prepared for this by the ICRC amounted to 26,370,000 Swiss francs. By deducting the credit balance of about 8.4 million carried over from 1982, the ICRC requested the international community for 18 million for its 1983 operation in the Lebanon.

Jordan

Begun in September 1982, the eighth series of visits to Jordanian places of detention came to an end on 28 February. ICRC delegates visited seventeen places of detention, containing 3,501 detainees, including 243 security prisoners in eight prisons. They had interviews without witnesses with 230 detainees.

Europe

Poland

ICRC visits to internees in Poland came to an end, after martial law was lifted, on 31 December 1982, with the suppression of internment and

the release of the people in the category of internees. However, the ICRC is continuing its efforts with a view to gaining access to the detainees of other categories (those arrested, awaiting trial and sentenced).

The assistance action of the International Red Cross on behalf of those in need continued during January and February, as in the previous months, in close collaboration with the Polish Red Cross.

USSR

Mr. Michel Veuthey and Mr. Thierry Germond represented the ICRC at a training course, from 14 to 19 February, in Moscow, organized by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR. This course was intended for certain members of the personnel of the Alliance who could be called on in future to take part in ICRC or League missions abroad. The ICRC representatives presented lectures and showed films on the ICRC's activities in the world.
