

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

March-April 1983

Africa

Angola

The President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, accompanied by the ICRC delegate general for Africa, Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, went on a mission to Angola from 6 to 10 April and met representatives of the Angolan Government, in particular the Ministers of External Relations, Health, Defence, State Security and Provincial Coordination. Apart from the progressive resumption of ICRC humanitarian action on the central Angolan plateau (Planalto) since the end of January and a survey of its activities throughout the world, the President of the ICRC discussed more specific subjects, such as the carrying off by UNITA of foreign collaborators at Alto Catumbela (Benguela province) on 12 March. The delegate general for Africa only returned to Geneva on 14 April after discussing the future of ICRC assistance action on the Planalto with the ICRC delegation.

Assistance activities on the Planalto

Between 2 and 16 April, an aeroplane was chartered by the ICRC to transport nearly 495 tons of relief and more than 136 000 litres of fuel required for the assistance action on the Planalto. A series of 24 trips were made between Luanda, Lobito and Huambo.

As from 15 April, the sub-delegation at Huambo started a programme of food distribution to 1200 ill nourished children, with the opening of four distribution points on the outskirts of the town.

In the province of Bie, evaluations carried out in April by delegates in various villages showed that the health status of the population had appreciably improved because of the adequate maize harvest. At the

beginning of May, the delegation began a general distribution of seed in favour of 35 000 displaced persons; it also distributed supplementary foodstuffs as well as blankets and warm clothing, necessary because of the approach of the cold season.

Mozambique

The contract between the ICRC and the Mozambican authorities concerning the functioning of the Maputo orthopaedic centre was renewed for one year on 31 March.

In addition, following the conclusions resulting from an evaluation mission carried out at the beginning of 1983 in the company of the secretary general of the "Mozambican Red Cross", the head of the ICRC delegation at Maputo presented to the competent authorities the projects for medical and food assistance that the ICRC plans to undertake in favour of the population affected by the drought and fighting in the Vilanculos district (Inhambane province). This project was also discussed with the Mozambican Minister of Health, Mr. Mocumbi, when he was received by the President of the ICRC during his visit to Geneva, on 11 May.

Zimbabwe

During his visit to Harare at the end of March, the ICRC delegate general for Africa and the regional delegate at Harare met President Banana of Zimbabwe, as well as the Minister for Labour and Social Affairs, Mr. Kangai. The main topic of these talks was the situation in the interior of the country and the availability of the ICRC to undertake an assistance and protection action if required.

In addition, relief (provisions, blankets) estimated at 60 000 Swiss Francs were provided by the ICRC and distributed by the "Catholic Commission on Social Service and Development" of the Bulawayo diocese to 2 000 beneficiaries, mostly children, who had taken refuge in missions situated in the Tsholotho and Lupane districts.

Chad

ICRC delegates continued to travel through the country to visit prisoners of war. A transfer by aeroplane to the N'Djamena hospital was arranged for four prisoners of war who were in hospital at Abeche. During their visits, the delegates handed some relief materials to the prisoners, consisting essentially of clothing, mats and soap.

Ethiopia

In April, ICRC delegates visited some 200 Somali prisoners of war who had already received a complete customary visit in February. On this occasion, 3.3 tons of food relief and some medical aid were handed to the prisoners.

A doctor and a nutritionist, both ICRC delegates, visited Eritrea and Gondar between 20 March and the end of April to evaluate the development of the joint Ethiopian Red Cross and ICRC (medical and food) assistance action and to define, if necessary, new assistance programmes. At the beginning of April, a parallel evaluation mission was carried out in the Genale region of Bale province, which led to the elaboration of an assistance programme in favour of some 12 000 displaced persons.

Tanzania

The ICRC regional delegate for Eastern Africa, accompanied by the delegate responsible for dealing with dissemination and cooperation with the National Societies, visited Tanzania in March from their base in Nairobi. Numerous contacts were made on this occasion with the authorities and the representatives of the National Red Cross; it was decided to work out a programme for the dissemination of humanitarian law among the armed forces and the police.

The regional delegate also took part in the conference held at Arusha, from 21 to 26 March, in which representatives of countries members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and of certain voluntary agencies participated, to deal with questions concerning assistance to refugees in Africa.

Djibouti

The ICRC regional delegate for Eastern Africa visited Djibouti, from 16 to 24 April, together with the delegate responsible for dealing with dissemination and cooperation with National Societies. They met numerous representatives of the authorities and of the "Red Crescent" with whom they discussed the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the ratification of the Protocols, as well as ICRC activities, especially in the field of the Agency; the programmes of activities of the Society were also examined.

Zaire

In March and April, ICRC delegates made 11 visits to 9 places of detention (8 in the capital), administered by the Security Service, the Zairian armed forces or the Department of Justice. The ICRC deputy delegate general for Africa, Mr. Chappuis, went on a mission to Zaire from 5 to 12 April to make an estimate of the protection action; he had talks with the Commissioner of State for Justice, the chief of the general staff of the state police force and the general administrator of the National Centre for Research and Investigation.

A mission to Shaba was carried out in March with the object of evaluating and checking up on assistance projects on hygiene and on development assistance in agricultural production undertaken in five prisons in 1982.

A dozen talks were given to schools, to the Zairian armed forces and to members of the Zairian Red Cross within the context of the programme on information and dissemination of the principles of the Red Cross and of international humanitarian law.

Regional delegation in Togo

The ICRC regional delegation at Lome has the task of establishing and maintaining relations with the authorities and the Red Cross Societies in the countries of Western Africa and, more particularly, of organizing programmes for the dissemination of international humanitarian law in conjunction with them. From the beginning of the year until the end of April, ICRC delegates based in Togo have been on missions to Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal for this purpose.

Latin America

El Salvador

On 24 March, the President of the Republic, Dr. Alvaro Magana, received ICRC delegates for talks which included a survey of ICRC activities.

In March and April, the ICRC continued its activities in favour of the victims of the conflict in El Salvador. During this period, ICRC assistance action slowed down somewhat because ICRC delegates were denied access to certain regions due to the fighting in some of the prov-

inces. Nevertheless, by mid-April, delegates were again able to reach the northern part of Morazan province where they had not been for about two months.

In April, 645 tons of relief were distributed to 78 000 displaced persons; in March, only 58 000 persons benefited from ICRC assistance.

Medical assistance was also dependent on the military situation during these two months. In spite of this, the 25 persons who make up the three mobile ICRC teams (ICRC doctor-delegates and nurses and locally recruited medical personnel) held 70 consultations in 59 villages; a monthly average of 8 450 persons thus received medical care.

In March and April, visits to temporary or permanent detention centres administered by the armed forces, the security forces and the Ministry of Justice continued regularly in the capital and in the provinces. In March, ICRC delegates made 138 visits, including visits to 104 new detainees; in April, 130 visits were made and there were 125 new detainees. These visits were made according to customary ICRC procedure.

In addition, 7 members of the armed forces captured by Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front fighters were liberated in March; they were handed over to the ICRC who returned them to their respective units.

Nicaragua

Following troubles on the Honduran frontier between the Sandinist army and counter-revolutionary groups in March, the ICRC has been especially concerned about the possible consequences of these events for the civilian population in this region. Thus, on 31 March, the ICRC informed the Nicaraguan authorities of its availability to provide protection and assistance to the civilian victims of the conflict situation.

Over the past two months, the ICRC delegation at Managua has continued its regular visits to the two main prisons in the capital (Tipitapa and Zona Franca). On the other hand, delegates were no longer authorized by the National Penitentiary Service (NPS) to visit places of detention in the provinces. The delegation took several steps to try to resolve this situation.

Chile

In the course of a series of visits to places of detention, ICRC delegates met 97 detainees, of whom 69 were seen without witnesses. These detainees, of whom 16 were new, were split up between seven detention centres.

Peru

ICRC delegates undertook a new series of visits to places of detention in Peru from 18 April. The preceding visits took place in November and December of last year. These visits will take about two months.

Uruguay

On 1 March, an agreement was signed with the Uruguayan authorities establishing procedures for visits to places of detention. The first of three series of visits arranged for this year started on 4 April.

Asia

Indonesia-Timor

Family reunions

A programme of family reunions started at the end of 1981 in collaboration with the Indonesian Red Cross is still continuing. From the beginning of 1983 until the end of April, 62 persons left East Timor and were reunited with their respective families; 30 went to Australia and 32 to Portugal.

Assistance activities

In March, three delegates, one of them a doctor, carried out two successive evaluation missions, one to the island of Atauro and the other to a dozen villages on the island of Timor.

Following suggestions put forward by its delegates, the ICRC strengthened its team by adding a relief specialist delegate to supervise the distributions and to make regular re-evaluations of the needs of the people receiving assistance. In addition, a nurse nutritionist was sent out to assist in carrying out the nutritional programme on Atauro and to work out other programmes on the main island.

The joint ICRC and Indonesian Red Cross assistance mission on Timor was plunged into mourning by a helicopter accident on 2 April which cost the lives of two persons on board; three others were wounded. The team was returning from an urgent humanitarian mission in the south of the island. This accident is also mentioned in another section of the *Review*.

Appeal for funds

In May, the ICRC launched an appeal for funds for its humanitarian activities in Timor in 1983.

In its appeal, the ICRC summarized the whole of its activities in Timor in 1982 and noted its objectives for 1983 in protection (visits to detainees, searches for missing persons, the reuniting of separated families, etc.) and assistance (urgent medical aid, food assistance and various relief, etc.).

The budget drawn up by the ICRC for these activities in 1983 totals 10.7 million Swiss Francs. Subtracting the balance left over from 1982 results in a shortfall of around 3.9 million Swiss Francs and it was for this amount that the appeal was launched.

Malaysia

From 11 to 13 April, two ICRC delegates, one of whom was a doctor, visited 160 persons at the Kamunting prison near Taiping city, who had been arrested under the "Internal Security Act".

Philippines

From 20 to 31 March, the delegate general for Asia, Mr. J. de Courten, went on a mission to the Philippines. In his talks with the Philippine Red Cross, he examined the joint ICRC and Philippine Red Cross assistance programmes in favour of displaced persons, in particular on the island of Mindanao. In the course of meetings with the authorities, notably with the Ministers of Defence and of Justice, certain questions concerning ICRC visits to detainees were discussed. Lastly, the delegate general, together with the National Red Cross and the general staff of the army, studied programmes being prepared on the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

Between 19 April and 2 May, two ICRC delegates visited 89 detainees ("public order violators") in six places of detention.

Refugees in South-East Asia and anti-pirate programme

Earlier issues of the *Review* (see in particular the *Review* of March-April 1982) have reported on the efforts by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, supported by the ICRC, to make governments aware of the need to combat piracy against refugees on the high seas in South-East Asia. As a first step, governments agreed to finance the work of a Thai government armed anti-piracy contingent.

A new meeting was held by the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the ICRC on 12 April in Geneva for representatives of a dozen donor countries. The President of the ICRC represented the Institution at this session and he suggested that an additional 2.5 million dollars be collected to ensure the expansion of the anti-piracy contingent. All the participants approved the proposed programme.

Pakistan

The ICRC has decided to establish a sub-delegation at Quetta (Baluchistan province) and install a 40-bed surgical unit in the town. Afghan war wounded will have priority of access to this hospital. A dozen staff members from Geneva (including 7 belonging to the medical service) and around fifty local employees will be posted to Quetta. Work should start in July.

The cost of these new projects, plus the costs of managing the surgical unit up to the end of 1983 have increased the budget for ICRC action in Pakistan by some 1.8 million Swiss Francs for the current year.

During his visit to the ICRC in Geneva, on 19 April, Mr. Shahabzada Yakub Khan, Pakistani Minister for Foreign Affairs, was received by the President of the ICRC together with the main collaborators concerned. The ICRC projects for Quetta were described to the visitor. The future sub-delegation of Quetta will be under the delegation of Peshawar.

The ICRC hospital at Peshawar noted a new sharp increase in the number of wounded admitted in April; the total jumped to 125 from 30 in the preceding month.

Afghanistan

At a meeting in Geneva with the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shah Mohammad Douste, on 18 April, the President of the ICRC broached the question of the return of the ICRC to Kabul. This exchange of views did not result in an agreement on the permanent resumption of ICRC activities in Afghanistan.

Other talks also took place in Geneva on the subject of Afghanistan, notably with the head of the Jamiat-e-Islami movement, who thanked the ICRC for its medical action in Pakistan in favour of the Afghan refugees.

Regional delegation in India

From 5 to 12 April, two delegates went on a mission to Bangladesh to re-establish contact with the authorities and to remind them of the

availability of the ICRC to provide protection. They also met officers of the National Red Cross, with whom programmes for the dissemination of international humanitarian law are in the process of being worked out.

From 19 to 23 April, the regional delegate was in Sri Lanka to resume contacts with representatives of the government as well as to discuss the dissemination of international humanitarian law with the National Red Cross Society.

Finally, two ICRC representatives from Geneva in addition to the regional delegate participated as observers in the seventh summit meeting of the non-aligned countries which was held at New Delhi from 7 to 11 March.

Thailand

After the fighting of the beginning of February, followed by a period of calm in March, violent clashes broke out again as from 31 March in the region of Phnom Chat and, in the days that followed, in the northern sector of the frontier (O'Smach region). Calm only returned in the middle of April.

Two groups of refugees, made up of around 8 000 and 28 000 persons, had to be evacuated to new sites, at "Red Hill" near to Khao-I-Dang and at the Nong An camp, both on the Thai side of the frontier. The ICRC, UNBRO (United Nations Border Relief Organization) and the voluntary agencies worked in close collaboration during this emergency period.

During the fighting, the surgical hospital of Khao-I-Dang took in numerous wounded (97 the first day, for example). A supplementary surgical team of the Danish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies was immediately sent out as a reinforcement.

In the northern sector of the frontier, the new Kap Cherg hospital which had been inaugurated at the beginning of January also experienced an influx of patients: 159 were admitted in April, of whom 44 were admitted in the first two days of the fighting in that zone, on 3 and 4 April. A supplementary team also had to be sent there as a reinforcement. It was made up of 2 British doctors, a Finnish nurse and 10 Thai nurses.

On 14 April, the refugee population at Nong An (on Thai soil, on the east of O'Smach) was transferred to a new site called "Green Hill" situated in the north of O'Smach. At the end of April, the population of "Red Hill", made up of refugees from Phnom Chat, Kok Tahan and Chom Kakor, was still waiting to see what the future held in store for them.

Kampuchea

In March and April, ICRC delegates at Phnom Penh made a tour of the main hospitals of the capital. Following this re-evaluation of needs, in April the delegation started to provide material allowing for an improvement in the preparation for blood transfusions. The hospitals "of the Revolution", "du 7 janvier" and "du 17 avril" should also receive ICRC aid to carry out works to improve the provision of drinking water in these establishments.

Middle East

Iraq/Iran conflict

In February, the ICRC delegate general for the Middle East undertook missions to Teheran and Baghdad, where he had conversations with the authorities on the subject of the ICRC activities.

In *Iraq*, in March, ICRC delegates visited in the accustomed manner the five camps holding Iranian prisoners of war (the three Mossul camps and the Ramadi and Anbar camps) and four hospitals where sick or wounded prisoners of war are cared for, and they made one visit—limited to Agency activities—to the civilian population displaced from Iranian Kurdistan to Iraqi soil. In April, they visited the three Mosul prisoner-of-war camps, the two Mosul hospitals and the Al-Rashid hospital.

In *Iran*, the first two weeks of March were marked by a renewal of activity, which unfortunately was subsequently interrupted. During the first fortnight, delegates visited and registered some Iraqi prisoners of war. The mixed medical commission was able to finish its tour of the camps in the capital and a list of 104 cases for repatriation was transmitted to the authorities. Nevertheless, as from mid-March, ICRC activity was in abeyance.

Two repatriation operations were, however, carried out. Acting as a neutral intermediary between the parties, the ICRC took charge of 32 Iraqi prisoners of war, handed over to them by the Iranian authorities on 30 April 1983, for transfer back to Iraq. Another operation took place on 1 May 1983 in which 32 Iranian prisoners of war, held by Iraq, were handed over by the ICRC to representatives of Iran. These two operations, consistent with Articles 109 and 110 of the Third

Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, took place at Ankara airport (Turkey). At Ankara, all the infrastructure and the personnel needed for these operations were made available by the Turkish Red Crescent which, together with the ICRC, provided the medical care required by the wounded prisoners.

Israel and the occupied territories

In March, because hundreds of persons hit by a sudden and mysterious illness were admitted to hospital in the occupied West Bank, the International Committee of the Red Cross sent Dr. Franz Altherr, doctor-delegate, to the area to carry out an evaluation of the situation (not to carry out an inquiry as this is not within the terms of reference of the ICRC). Over the last ten years, Dr. Altherr, a general practitioner, has carried out numerous evaluation missions on behalf of the ICRC in the territories occupied by Israel.

During his mission from 31 March to 4 April, he had talks with Israeli doctors who had treated the first cases; he went to several hospitals in the West Bank to examine patients and to talk to the Palestinian doctors in attendance; he also met several prominent persons in the West Bank as well as the director general of the Israeli Ministry of Health.

In view of the objective report of its doctor-delegate, the number of cases admitted to hospital, and the uncertainty affecting the victims and the population of the region, as observed by its delegate, the ICRC recommended that an organism acceptable to all parties and of recognized competence start as soon as possible to carry out thorough and prolonged examinations to determine the cause and the possible treatment of this complaint.

In this context, the ICRC noted with satisfaction the decision of the United Nations to send a group of experts to the area.

During a mission to the Near East, the ICRC delegate for the Middle East visited Israel, in April, and was received by the new Minister of Defence, Mr. Moshe Arens.

Lebanon

The ICRC continued its activities related to the Lebanese conflict, in Lebanon itself as well as in Israel and Syria. In the two latter countries ICRC delegates regularly visited prisoners of war.

In addition to the activities that have become customary with the passing months, from 15 March, the ICRC started to visit persons

detained by the Lebanese authorities, according to usual ICRC procedures.

In order to get up to date regarding the general situation in the region and to evaluate the protection action, the delegate general for the Middle East went on a mission that took him to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Israel between 10 and 25 April.

Europe

United Kingdom

The ICRC carried out a new series of visits to places of detention in Northern Ireland, as had previously been done in July 1982. From 25 to 30 April, four ICRC delegates, including a doctor, visited more than 2 000 detainees in the Maze, Belfast, Armagh and Magilligan places of detention.

Poland

The ICRC continued to press the Polish authorities for an answer regarding the continuation of its work in Poland, especially concerning the protection of persons arrested, accused or condemned for infringement of the martial law legislation. The President of the ICRC had talks with Mr. Henryk Jaroszek, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, who came to ICRC headquarters on 14 April.

Several meetings also took place, in Geneva, with heads of the Polish Red Cross who were received by the President of the ICRC and members of the directorate: Dr. Ryscard Brzozowski, President, on 18 and 22 April, and Mrs Wieslawa Kroll, Vice-President, on 21 and 22 March.
