

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

May-June 1983

Africa

Angola

On 30 June, the ICRC, acting as a neutral intermediary at the request of all the interested parties, arranged for 55 persons held by UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) to leave Angola on board an aircraft chartered for the purpose. This group consisted of 45 Czechoslovaks (including 38 women and children) and 10 Portuguese citizens; they had all been taken prisoner in March at Alto Catumbela, near the country's Atlantic coast. The Portuguese citizens were handed over to their diplomatic representatives in Johannesburg (South Africa) and the Czechoslovaks were flown on board another ICRC aircraft to Kinshasa (Zaire), where they were handed over to the consular authorities of their country. Before the transfer, three ICRC delegates, accompanied by a nurse and a doctor, spent a week at a UNITA base in southern Angola, where they gave medical care, distributed food, clothing and transmitted family messages to the detainees.

On the Planalto, the food distribution programme launched by the ICRC sub-delegation in Huambo on 15 April was brought to an end, pending restructuring of the programme; the five food distribution points set up on the outskirts of Huambo were shut down in view of the considerably improved food situation. During the first half of the year, the ICRC distributed 688 tons of relief, worth 931,000 Swiss francs, to the displaced population on the Planalto.

The two prosthetists whom the ICRC sent from Geneva at the end of May to the orthopaedic centre at Bomba Alta, which has been run by the "Angola Red Cross" since the end of March, are working in close collaboration with the Angolan team to manufacture prostheses for amputees.

Namibia / Southwest Africa

On 20 May, two ICRC delegates visited 139 security detainees and 14 Angolan prisoners of war being held in a camp.

South Africa / Venda

Two ICRC delegates travelled to Venda on a survey mission to assess the needs in the region and to take up the subject of prison visits with the authorities.

During their stay the delegates were allowed to visit, on 10 May, in accordance with ICRC procedure, a sentenced prisoner in the prison of Thohoyandou.

Lesotho

An ICRC delegation from Geneva participated in the seminar organized jointly by the League and the ICRC for the National Societies in the region; it was held at Maseru from 16 to 21 May. The theme of the meetings was disaster preparedness, one aspect of which directly concerns the National Societies and the ICRC: preparedness in the event of conflicts.

Congo

A delegate from the ICRC delegation in Kinshasa was in the Congo from 13 to 25 April. In Brazzaville, he gave eight lectures to an audience of about 300 people, consisting of members of the National Society, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and students.

He also had talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his staff, to discuss in particular the protection activities of the ICRC.

Senegal

Mr. de Rougemont, dissemination delegate in Lomé, visited Dakar from 6 May to 3 June to participate in a "training workshop for communications in the field", organized by the League and the Communications School of the University of Dakar.

Liberia

Mr. Rochat, ICRC regional delegate for West Africa, visited Liberia from 12 to 20 June at the invitation of the Liberian Red Cross Society. The object of the visit was to help the Liberian Red Cross to plan a

dissemination and information programme and assistance activities in the prisons (hygiene projects and social activities for detainees not visited by their families, for example).

The subject of the approximately 4,000 refugees from Sierra Leone installed in the border area since mid-May was also broached.

Upper Volta

Mr. Rochat, ICRC regional delegate, was in Ouagadougou from 25 to 31 May and had several talks with government authorities. On the same day that he obtained the Ministry of the Interior's permission in principle to visit detainees, the Head of State announced that all detainees were to be released.

For the dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law, Mr. Rochat met with encouraging reaction to his proposals, both in government circles and by the National Red Cross, and the Ministry of Defence announced that it would send three officers to the next seminar in San Remo.

Chad

In view of the deteriorating state of affairs in the north of Chad, the ICRC requested of both the authorities in N'Djamena and the representatives of the "Transitional Government of National Unity" permission to go to the northern part of the country and to develop its protection and medical assistance activities in that area.

The ICRC decided to stop from the beginning of July its assistance in personnel and cash to the orthopaedic workshop of the Catholic mission in Kabalaye, which gives war invalids rehabilitation training. The workshop is now able to run autonomously.

Zaire

On 3 June, the ICRC President met President Mobutu Sese Seko in Switzerland. The meeting provided an opportunity to take stock of ICRC protection activities in Zaire. As he had already done in 1982, the Zairian Chief of State confirmed that the ICRC was authorized to visit all places of detention; he did not question the institution's role, although an amnesty had been declared on 19 May for security detainees who had been charged or sentenced.

Because of the amnesty, the ICRC made no visits in June to places of detention controlled by the Ministry of Justice; indeed, it had received

official notification that the security detainees had been released. On the other hand, the ICRC continued its regular visits to places of detention controlled by the armed forces or the security service, and registered 5 new detainees in June.

Rwanda

Two delegates based in Kinshasa carried out a mission to Rwanda from 24 to 31 May; they resumed discussions with the authorities on the traditional procedure for visits, with a view to protection activity for security detainees. They also met with leaders of the Rwandese Red Cross to discuss the development of that Society's activities concerning dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law and fundamental Red Cross principles, methods for tracing of missing persons and the transmission of family messages.

Ethiopia

In May, a further visit was made to the Somali prisoners being held at Harar. Camp beds were given to them.

Within the context of the joint Ethiopian Red Cross—ICRC assistance action, the following programmes were carried out during the first half of the year:

- In Eritrea, 791 tons of relief (worth about 1,080,000 Swiss francs) was distributed to some 39,000 persons in the regions of Seraye, Hamasen and Keren; medical assistance was also given (about 40,000 francs);
- In Gondar (regions of Libo and Siemen), 100 tons of food, clothing and blankets (157,000 francs) and medical relief (14,000 francs) were provided to 4,500 persons;
- In Mekele, in the Tigre region, 246 tons of relief (425,000 francs) was distributed to some 10,000 persons;
- In the region of Hararge, 100 tons of sundry relief (200,000 francs) and some medical relief (1,000 francs) were distributed to 5,000 persons.

In Bale province, an assistance programme in favour of 14,500 persons in the Genale region started in June.

The two centres for the civilian disabled victims of the hostilities—located in Harar and Asmara and operated since 1982—received some 200 patients.

The head of the ICRC relief division in Geneva went on a study and evaluation mission to Ethiopia from 25 to 30 May. The purpose of this

mission was to assess the current food situation in the drought-stricken areas and to examine the best means of co-operating with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (the co-ordinating body of the Ethiopian Government) and the procedure for efficient co-operation with the various relief organizations working in the country.

Sudan

During the first half of the year, the ICRC gave the Eritrean Relief Associations 496 tons of food (worth about 600,000 Swiss francs) for victims of the Eritrean conflict.

Madagascar

In June, two delegates based in Nairobi carried out a mission to Madagascar to keep up the good ICRC relations with the Malgasy Government and Red Cross. The dissemination of knowledge of international humanitarian law within the National Society and to the armed forces and students was one of the subjects discussed during the mission.

Latin America

President's Mission to Central America

From 27 June to 8 July, Mr. Alexandre Hay, ICRC President, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, director of Operational Activities, and Mr. André Pasquier, delegate general for Latin America, carried out a mission to Central America which took him to Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica. The mission's objective was to take stock with governmental authorities of ICRC activities in the different countries.

In *Nicaragua*, Mr. Hay was received by Dr. Cordoba Rivas, a member of the governing Junta, Mr. Thomas Borge and Mr. René Vivas, Minister and Deputy Minister respectively of the Interior, Mrs. Astorga, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Tercero, Deputy Minister of Health. He also visited two of the main detention centres in Managua which ICRC delegates have regularly visited.

In *Honduras*, President Hay had talks with General Alvarez, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In *El Salvador*, Mr. Hay met with the President of the Republic, Dr. Magana, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

In all three countries, President Hay also met with leaders of Red Cross National Societies, from whom he received a warm welcome. The El Salvador Red Cross in particular expressed its gratitude for the ICRC's work and the high level of co-operation between the two institutions.

At the end of this mission, Mr. Hay went to *Costa Rica* to participate in the Twelfth Inter-American Red Cross Conference (see "In the Red Cross World" in this issue).

Missions of the delegate general

Mr. André Pasquier, ICRC delegate general for Latin America, carried out a mission to Uruguay and Argentina from 4 to 9 May. In Montevideo, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Chief of the Joint General Staff. In Buenos Aires, he conferred with the Deputy Minister of the Interior and with representatives of the National Red Cross Society.

Mr. Pasquier also carried out a mission to Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador (29 May to 5 June), where he discussed current humanitarian programmes with Government authorities and laid the groundwork for the mission of the ICRC President. Mr. Pasquier ended his mission to Central America with a brief visit to Guatemala (6 to 8 June), during which he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

El Salvador

Throughout the months of May and June, continued hostilities held up ICRC relief work in some of the eastern departments (Morazan and La Union in particular): the volume of food aid diminished from 296 tons distributed in May—to 31,000 displaced persons in 13 villages—to 120 tons in June, distributed to 14,000 recipients in 6 villages. On the other hand, relief programmes in departments in the centre of the country were stepped up, mainly because of the influx of displaced persons arriving in this zone. ICRC and El Salvador Red Cross teams distributed 184 tons of food in May and 230 tons in June to almost 24,000 displaced persons. During the first half of the year, a total of 2,925 tons of relief, worth 3.7 million Swiss francs, was distributed by the ICRC in El Salvador.

Regarding medical assistance, ICRC mobile teams went to villages in ten departments, giving medical treatment and dental care to the dis-

placed population. Since the beginning of the year, 46,000 persons have benefitted from care received during 180 such medical visits. Furthermore, in the context of the sanitary education programme set up by the ICRC, two hygienists recruited locally visited major centres in departments of the east and centre, organizing basic training courses in public health (preventive medicine, first aid, hygiene, etc.).

As regards protection activities, the ICRC regularly visited, in the capital and in the provinces, places of detention controlled by the Ministry of Justice and the armed forces. In May and June, the delegates saw respectively 119 and 115 security detainees, with whom they were able to speak without witness. Since the beginning of the year, 775 visits (262 in San Salvador and 513 in the departments) were carried out in places of detention, during which 648 new detainees were seen and registered. During this same period, 72 soldiers of the Salvadoran army were released by the "Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front" (FMNL) and handed over to ICRC delegates, who accompanied them back to their respective garrisons.

In May and June, the ICRC received 586 requests for enquiries concerning detainees or missing persons and was able to give a reply to 166 requests. Furthermore, about 40 people came each day to one of the three offices of the ICRC Tracing Agency (located in San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana) seeking news of missing relatives.

Nicaragua

On 6 May, the ICRC organized transportation by air of 71 members of Miskito Indian families living on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, to facilitate their visit to relatives being detained in Managua.

Honduras

Mr. Jean-Pierre Givel, ICRC delegate, has been in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, since the middle of May to develop the activities of the Tracing Agency in that country, especially the exchange of family messages between Miskito Indian refugees in Honduras and their relatives in Nicaragua. Mr. Givel, who will perform this task in collaboration with the Honduran Red Cross, carried out a mission from 23 May to 4 June to the Mocerón region, where the Miskito Indian refugee camps are located, to study on the spot the practical organization of the exchange of family messages.

The ICRC also intends to set up in Honduras, in conjunction with the National Society, a programme to disseminate the fundamental

principles of the Red Cross and of International Humanitarian Law, both within the National Society and to the armed forces, universities and the general public, and to study the possibility of strengthening the operational potential of the branches of the Honduran Red Cross.

Visits to places of detention

In May and June, ICRC delegates in Latin America made several series of visits to other places of detention. These visits are made by teams that include an ICRC doctor. The delegates talk without witnesses to detainees of their choice or to detainees who have asked to speak to them.

In *Chile*, a delegate based in Buenos Aires visited, from 16 to 24 May, two places of detention where persons were being held as a result of events.

In *Paraguay*, the same delegate had access, from 31 May to 8 June, to 5 places of detention and saw 54 detainees.

In *Uruguay*, a team of six delegates, including two doctors, carried out visits to all places of detention from 4 April to 2 June; they visited 8 places of detention and saw 878 security detainees, with whom the delegates were able to speak without witnesses.

In *Peru*, between 18 April and 26 May, ICRC delegates, including one doctor, visited 20 places of detention controlled by the Ministry of Justice throughout the country. They saw 690 security detainees. Relief (blankets, food, medicaments, toiletries and leisure articles) was distributed during the visits, and the medical delegate examined detainees who so wished.

In *Suriname*, two ICRC delegates visited two detention centres on 24 and 25 June; they saw 7 persons arrested after the attempted coup d'etat of March 1982 and already registered during a visit in February 1983. Of the 17 persons visited at that time (detained or under house arrest), 10 had been released.

Asia

Kampuchea

In April, the ICRC delegation in Phnom Penh started to supply the principal hospitals in the capital with equipment to improve the quality of preparation for drip transfusions. By the end of June, this equipment

was in use in three hospitals ("The Revolution", "17 April" and "7 January"). In the provinces, the hospital of Takhmau also received similar equipment. Work was also started in the capital's main hospitals to improve their supply of drinking water. The new water supply pipes were put into service in the "17 April" hospital in June, greatly improving hygienic conditions.

Three medical teams sent by Red Cross Societies are currently working in Kampuchea: a Swedish Red Cross surgical team at the Kompong Chhnang hospital, a Swiss Red Cross team at the Kompong Cham hospital and a French Red Cross team in the Prey Veng and Kandal provinces.

After treating a large number of emergency cases in May, the Swedish Red Cross surgical team at the Kompong Chhnang hospital, in addition to their usual work, spent the month of June organizing the renovation of the buildings (installation of a generator, water supply pipes, a distilling machine, X-ray apparatus, etc.). The Swiss and French teams continued with their work and also set up a programme for detection and eradication of tuberculosis.

In May, the ICRC delegation received the necessary authorization to visit the orphanages in the provinces. The severe shortage of basic supplies in five orphanages in the provinces of Prey Veng, Pursat and Takeo led the delegates to set up a limited relief programme (clothing, kitchen equipment, school requisites, soap, etc.) to meet the most urgent needs.

Thailand

At the end of May, some 15,000 Khmer civilians were transferred from the provisional "Red Hill" camp (to which they had been evacuated after the fighting in April) to various zones south of Aranyaprathet. In collaboration with UNBRO (United Nations Border Relief Organization), the ICRC delegation carried out a survey in June of the food and medical needs of this population and set up a feeding programme to improve their state of health. Within the context of this programme, which started at the beginning of July, the ICRC has taken charge of organizing and supervising five new medical dispensaries and three intensive feeding centres in Taprik, Nong Pru, O'Sralau, Bang Beng, and Klong Wa. As additional medical personnel was required for these activities, three nurses were also sent. The responsibility for distributing food to new transferees and special food for the most vulnerable categories of the population has been assumed by UNBRO and WFP (World Food Programme).

The surgical teams continued their work in the ICRC hospitals at Khao-I-Dang and Kab Cherng; their numbers were increased in May to 9 doctors and 13 nurses. These teams were made available by the National Red Cross Societies of Denmark, Finland, France, Germany (FRG), Iceland, Japan, Norway and Sweden. In April and May, a total of 295 patients were admitted to these two hospitals. Finally, the ICRC mobile medical team continued its activities along the border. It was made up of 1 doctor, 2 nurses and one nutritionist for the survey of the needs, south of Aranyaprathet, as mentioned above.

Furthermore, as during previous months, the fate of the last Vietnamese refugees still in the former "NW 82" camp, shut down on 9 February, was a subject of concern for the ICRC. At the end of June, only 13 of the original 1,800 refugees were still awaiting an offer of resettlement from a potential host country. This low result is due to the joint efforts of the Thai authorities, the host countries, the ICM (Intergovernmental Committee for Migration) and the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).

Refugees in South-East Asia

Anti-piracy campaign

On 3 June, the ICRC President chaired a meeting of representatives from the 12 countries giving financial support to the anti-piracy campaign in South-East Asia. Also present were representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, including Mr. Moussalli, Director of the Protection Division. The meeting took place in a constructive atmosphere and the majority of the government representatives reaffirmed their support for the anti-piracy campaign. They are in favour of continuing the campaign with financial support from their governments.

Visits to tracing services

A division head of the ICRC Central Tracing Agency made a complete circuit of all the Tracing and Mailing Services of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in South-East Asia: he visited Hong Kong, Macao, Malaysia and Thailand from 14 to 23 March, and the Philippines, Singapore and Indonesia from 16 to 27 May. This comprehensive visit confirmed that the network of Tracing and Mailing Services set up in 1979 by the ICRC in collaboration with the National Societies of South-East Asia is a real success.

Efficient handling of the tracing problems presented by the exodus of almost half a million refugees from Viet Nam has been possible as

a result: more than 40,000 tracing requests have been handled in the past four years and the card-indexes of the National Societies contain almost one and a half million items of information.

The tracing services noted a steady decline in the number of requests received in 1982, parallel to the decrease in the number of new arrivals in the refugee camps.

Indonesia - Timor

Reuniting of families

Reuniting of families under the auspices of the ICRC and the Indonesian Red Cross was continuing: 25 persons were transferred from Timor to Lisbon on two flights organized on 14 and 16 May. On 10 June, one more person left for Portugal.

Furthermore, 5 persons left Timor for Australia on 15 May, followed by 20 others on 5 June.

Hong Kong and Taiwan

Two ICRC delegates went on a mission to Taiwan and Hong Kong from 14 to 19 May to discuss certain problems concerning reuniting families and the exchange of family messages.

Philippines

Between 19 April and 22 June, ICRC delegates in Manila carried out a new series of visits to Philippine places of detention. They visited 139 detainees classified in the category of "Public Order Violators" in 14 places of detention.

Pakistan

The ICRC delegation in Pakistan continued its activities in aid of the victims of the Afghan conflict.

As in the previous year, the number of patients admitted to the ICRC hospital in Peshawar, in the North-West Frontier Province was again higher in May (150 admissions in May, 123 in June).

Since it opened two years ago, ninety-one patients have been admitted to the paraplegic centre and 51 of them are still there. The paraplegics, war casualties, are patients whom the ICRC cannot leave to their own resources once their lives have been saved, but for them a long-term solution must be found. A new "para-block" is being constructed for this purpose.

The prosthetics workshop has been greatly expanded since it was established in October 1981 and now produces some 60 orthopaedic appliances per month for all sorts of amputations. It is planned to set up a physiotherapy section to prepare and train the amputees to use their prostheses.

The eleventh first aid course organized for Afghan refugees by the ICRC delegation took place in April and was successfully completed by 14 students. This brought the total number of students who received a diploma to 204.

In Quetta, Baluchistan Province, further progress was made in setting up an ICRC sub-delegation and a surgical unit comprising 40 beds for the care of Afghan wounded.

Middle East

Conflict between Iraq and Iran

ICRC Appeal

On 11 May, the ICRC in Geneva, released the following press communiqué:

“Since the outbreak of the conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq the highest authorities of both those States have several times confirmed their intention to honour their international obligations deriving from the Geneva Conventions. Despite these assurances, the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has had a delegation in both countries since the start of hostilities, more than thirty months ago, has encountered in spite of its repeated representations all kinds of obstacles in the exercise of its mandate under the Geneva Conventions”.

Faced with grave and repeated breaches of international humanitarian law, which it has itself witnessed or of which it has established the existence through reliable and verifiable sources, and having found it impossible to induce the parties to put a stop to such violations, the ICRC felt duty bound to appeal on 9 May to all States parties to the Geneva Conventions. The ICRC stressed that, pursuant to its policy, it undertakes such an overt step only in very exceptional circumstances, when dictated by the urgent need to protect the victims and when its confidential representations have failed to put an end to the violations.

In a memorandum to the two belligerents and to all other signatories to the Conventions, the ICRC outlined the conditions in which the PoWs

in each country are held. It also pointed to grave violations committed by both countries, such as the summary execution of captive soldiers, abandoning of enemy wounded on the battlefield and indiscriminate bombardment of towns and villages.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran the violations are all the more serious considering the larger number of prisoners, and to most of them the ICRC no longer has access. According to the Iranian authorities they are holding between 45,000 and 50,000 Iraqi prisoners of war. Although the Third Geneva Convention confers on those prisoners a legal status entitling them to specific rights, the Iranian authorities' continuous delaying tactics since May 1982, the obstacles and restrictions they have raised and their refusal to allow the ICRC to visit some PoW camps have prevented the ICRC from carrying out its work for the prisoners whom the Iranian authorities admit they are holding.

Moreover, the ICRC memorandum states, the Iraqi prisoners of war are subjected to ideological and political pressure, contrary to the Convention, and constituting an affront to the prisoners' dignity and disregard for their psychological wellbeing. Such pressure—intimidation, humiliation, forced participation in demonstrations decrying the Iraqi Government—has been increasing since September 1982.

The ICRC also reports that events in some camps have led to death and injury of prisoners.

In addition, most of the severely wounded and sick prisoners have not been repatriated as required by the Convention.

In the Republic of Iraq the ICRC had registered by 1 March 1983 some 6,800 Iranian prisoners of war who, after initial difficulties, have been able for the last few months to correspond with their families in a satisfactory manner. Every month since October 1980 ICRC delegates have visited the prisoners of war, in a manner consistent with the procedure laid down in the Geneva Convention. However, the ICRC is convinced that some Iranian prisoners—several hundred of whose names are known to it—have been concealed from it since the beginning of the conflict and are imprisoned in places to which it has never had access. Only a few dozen such prisoners have been returned to the prisoner-of-war camps and registered by the ICRC. Ill-treatment of PoWs has been witnessed and disorders in camps have been quelled by force of arms. Most of the severely wounded and sick have not been repatriated as required by the Convention.

Furthermore, tens of thousands of Iranian civilians have been deported to Iraq by the Iraqi armed forces, in breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The ICRC has asked the States parties to the Geneva Conventions to make every effort—in discharge of the obligation they assumed under article 1 of the Conventions not only to respect but to ensure respect for the Conventions—to see that international humanitarian law is applied and these violations affecting tens of thousands of persons cease. It is imperative that the ICRC be enabled to fully discharge the humanitarian task the States have entrusted to it. Every means provided for in the Geneva Conventions to ensure their respect must be used to effect, especially the Protecting Powers which should be appointed to represent the belligerents' interests in their enemy's territory.

Activities of the delegations

In May and June, ICRC delegations in Iran and Iraq made every effort to fulfil their mission as far as it was possible for them to do so.

In Iraq, after the restrictions on the delegation's work imposed in April had been lifted, ICRC delegates visited, in May and in June, the five camps holding Iranian prisoners of war (the three Mosul camps and the camps of Ramadi and Anbar) and three hospitals where wounded or sick prisoners of war were being cared for. These camps and hospitals had already been visited by the ICRC delegates in the preceding months.

In Iran, the delegation's activities, which had been broken off in mid-March, were resumed on 11 June with the registration of the names of prisoners of war; by the end of the month 10,000 names had been added to the lists previously drawn up by the ICRC. Visits to Iraqi prisoners, in accordance with ICRC procedure, were resumed on 27 June.

Also in June, the Iranian authorities agreed to accept some 42,000 family messages, sent by families in Iraq, for censorship and verification, then transmission to the Iraqi prisoners of war.

Visas were granted for additional delegates to build up the delegation's staff.

Lebanon

The situation in Lebanon was extremely tense during the months of May and June and was marked by outbursts of violence, armed clashes and terrorist acts.

The ICRC continued its assistance and protection activities in the context of the Lebanese conflict in Lebanon itself and in the border countries, Syria and Israel.

As it had done before, the ICRC delegation helped the Lebanese Red Cross to carry out various assistance operations (evacuation of the wounded to hospitals) following the numerous incidents that took place in those two months. The delegation also continued to provide medicaments and medical material to the country's hospitals and dispensaries.

The danger to the Palestinian population, especially the people held in camps in the Saida region, was a source of constant and profound concern to the ICRC delegates, who visited the camps daily. The security of this population is a serious problem, obviously outside the ICRC's competence.

Following incidents, two villages were blockaded by the armed forces occupying the country, one for eight days, the other for a shorter period. The delegates went there as soon as they were allowed to do so, to assess the food and medical situation and to bring relief where necessary.

The delegation participated in the repatriation of released foreign detainees, 720 of whom, by the end of June, had returned home since the beginning of the conflict.

ICRC delegates also visited Syrian prisoners of war being held in Israel, Israeli prisoners of war being held in Damascus, Israeli soldiers held prisoner by the Palestinian forces, and persons being held by the Lebanese authorities.

First-aid courses were organized jointly with the Lebanese Red Cross in Tripoli and the Bekaa Valley; orthopaedic programmes for the disabled were continued in Beit Chebab and Saida; tracing activities (exchange of family messages, search for missing persons) were also continued.