

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

November-December 1983

Africa

Missions by the delegate-general

From 30 November to 6 December, ICRC delegate-general for Africa Jean-Marc Bornet was on mission in *Chad*, where he had talks with the Ministers of the Interior and of Finance and also with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

On 27 and 28 December Mr. Bornet was in *Mozambique*, where he reviewed with the authorities potential ICRC action; he had interviews with the Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Health, as well as with representatives of the "Mozambique Red Cross".

Southern Africa

Four ICRC delegates, one of them a doctor, attended the release and transfer of twenty-eight persons detained by UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). On 23 and 29 December aircraft chartered by the ICRC conveyed these persons to Southern Africa where they were handed over to their own consular representatives.

The group included nineteen Portuguese civilians—twelve of whom were children—seven nuns, Canadian, Brazilian, Spanish and Portuguese, one Uruguayan priest and one person from Cape Verde.

Republic of South Africa

In November and December the ICRC delegation in Pretoria continued its assistance to detainees' and former detainees' families in straitened circumstances. It distributed 949 food parcels, bringing up to 4,990 the number of such parcels distributed in 1983, to a value of 312,000 Swiss francs.

The ICRC also paid the fares of families going to visit relatives in places of detention: 1,079 persons benefited in 1983 from this aid amounting to 262,000 Swiss francs.

Namibia / South-West Africa

ICRC delegates in Namibia, on 17 and 18 November, visited fourteen Angolan prisoners of war and 31 security detainees. The ICRC delegation continued distributing relief to detainees and their needy families.

Angola

Some 350 tons of relief, mainly food, but including seeds and clothing, was distributed in November and in December to displaced persons in Angola. In addition, 625 tons of relief was handed to the "Angolan Red Cross" and other charitable organizations for distribution to various groups of needy people.

The two ICRC prosthetists continued providing technical assistance to the Bomba Alta orthopedic centre in the Huambo province. Each month the centre fits an average of fifteen amputees with artificial limbs. In the south of the country, the medical personnel based at N'Giva continued tending patients in and around the town.

The ICRC tracing offices at Luanda, Lubango and N'Giva transmitted 166 family messages and registered 48 requests for the institution of enquiries.

Zaire

Continuing their protection activities, the ICRC delegates in Zaire, in November and December, made nine visits to places of detention where there were 591 detainees of all categories. The delegates provided relief at the same time.

Rwanda

An ICRC team of five delegates, a doctor and a specialist in hygiene, completed the series of visits begun in September to the prisons of Rwanda. From 7 to 25 November, they had access to nine places of detention in which there were 7033 detainees of all categories. The delegates provided relief and medical assistance.

Uganda

The Red Cross emergency action in Uganda, begun in the last week of October by the ICRC in close co-operation with the Ugandan Red Cross and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, was developed in November and December. Several assistance programmes

were started for the benefit of displaced persons in the Luwero, Mpigi and Mubende districts to the north of Kampala. These programmes had been drawn up after consultation with the Ugandan authorities and with representatives of the UN agencies and non-governmental organizations operating in the country.

Programmes of weekly food distributions were devised after consultation with the authorities in Kampala. Each week seven Red Cross teams distribute to some hundred thousand people rations of rice, corn, beans, milk powder and other food from thirty-three distribution centres. In November and December, the relief provided weighed 1,295 tons.

ICRC doctors and representatives from the Ugandan Red Cross, Save the Children Fund and OXFAM undertook a mission to assess medical needs of displaced persons. Seven medical teams (one of which was assigned to an inoculation programme) examined 83,000 persons in a score of camps. They treated 18,540 people and evacuated ninety-seven of them to hospitals. A thousand persons were inoculated against measles.

In close collaboration with the Ugandan Red Cross tracing section, the ICRC Tracing Agency Office in Kampala registered 660 enquiries between 14 November and 31 December. In the same period it received 594 requests for the reuniting of families (it proved possible to reunite 34 of them) and it transmitted 103 family messages.

By 31 December 1983 ICRC staff strength in Kampala was 41 persons, ten of whom had been seconded by the National Red Cross Societies of Australia, Canada, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Ugandan Red Cross had assigned more than 200 persons to the action.

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On 24 November tragedy struck the Red Cross action in Uganda: a Ugandan Red Cross vehicle conveying a medical team was fired upon by unidentified attackers at Waluleta, to the west of the Nakasongola road (Luwero district). One doctor and the driver were killed and another doctor and a female nurse were wounded.

Ethiopia

On 13 and 14 December, four ICRC delegates, one of them a doctor, visited in Harar 207 Somali prisoners of war captured during the Ogaden conflict.

The food assistance provided by the ICRC in Ethiopia, part of the relief operation undertaken jointly with the Ethiopian Red Cross,

amounted in November and December to 1,393 tons. It was distributed to some 75,000 victims of the internal tension and drought. Of this assistance, 484 tons went to Eritrea, 334 tons to Bale, 316 tons to Tigre, 231 tons to Gondar and 28 tons to Hararge.

From 2 to 6 November, the relief co-ordinator at the ICRC Addis Ababa delegation was in Tigre province to assess at Mekele, Axoum and elsewhere the needs of displaced persons. On 14 November a new feeding centre was opened at Chiri Ballo, near Genale, where some 500 children suffering from malnutrition are now being cared for.

An ICRC doctor was appointed to the ICRC Addis Ababa delegation in mid-November. His function is:

- to assess the medical needs of conflict victims and to devise appropriate assistance programmes;
- to co-ordinate medical and food aid for displaced persons and train the personnel necessary for this work in co-operation with the Ethiopian Red Cross;
- take part in the protection of Somali prisoners of war in Ethiopian hands.

The ICRC continued its medical assistance in the orthopedic centres for civilian amputees at Harar and Asmara. It also provided medical supplies to hospitals and dispensaries.

Somalia

In November three ICRC delegates, one of them a doctor, started a new series of visits to 209 Ethiopian and one Cuban prisoners of war.

In addition, an ICRC doctor went to three hospitals in Mogadishu and one at Belet Uen to assess medical needs.

Chad

With the agreement of all the parties, the ICRC on 13 November opened a delegation at Bardaï, the administrative capital of the Tibesti sub-prefecture. Its purpose in doing so was to extend to all regions of Chad its activities to protect and assist conflict victims. The delegation, of five delegates, a medical delegate and a female nurse, immediately began visiting prisoners of war, collecting family messages and assessing the food and medical situation of the civilian population.

By the end of December the ICRC delegation had visited and registered 177 prisoners of war detained in several townships in the regions of Zoumri, Zouar and Yebbi Bou, and also ten security detainees. The

persons visited were provided with blankets. The ICRC medical team undertook also survey missions in dispensaries and medical centres.

The ICRC delegation in N'Djamena continued its efforts to obtain access to prisoners held by the Chad governmental authorities; its efforts up to the end of December proved vain.

Regional delegation in Togo

The ICRC regional delegation for West Africa, in Lomé (Togo), continued its activities in the countries within its sphere of operations.

In *Ghana* from 15 to 22 November, the regional delegate conferred with the authorities on ICRC protection activities. He had talks also with the Ghanaian Red Cross leaders.

The ICRC regional delegate for West Africa was also in *Benin* from 12 to 17 December, with a view to explaining to the authorities the ICRC's protection activities.

Previously, in November, the Lomé delegate for dissemination gave a series of lectures in Benin on international humanitarian law and the activities of the Red Cross movement to the recruits at the National Police School in Cotonou and to some 300 student nurses and social workers at the Benin medico-social institute.

Latin America

Missions from Geneva

Dr. Athos Gallino, a member of the ICRC, took part as an observer in the ordinary meeting of the Inter-American Regional Committee of National Red Cross Societies (CORI), which was held in *Caracas, Venezuela*, from 9 to 11 December. Dr. Gallino was accompanied by Mr. Edmond Corthésy, ICRC deputy delegate general for Latin America, who spoke on ICRC activities in Latin America and in particular in Grenada.

Mr. Corthésy then went to *Peru* where, between 13 and 17 December, he met the President of the Republic, Mr. Fernando Belaunde Terry, the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of War, the Minister of the Interior and the Deputy Minister of Justice. He obtained the authorities' agreement to the opening of a permanent ICRC office in Lima and to the expansion of its protection activities to the places of detention under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. Mr. Cor-

they also visited the national headquarters of the Peruvian Red Cross, where he conferred with the President and his assistants.

In November, Mr. André Pasquier, delegate general for Latin America and the Caribbean, carried out a mission to *El Salvador*, *Honduras*, *Nicaragua* and *Costa Rica*. He spoke with leaders of National Societies and with government authorities about ICRC activities in their countries. During working sessions with ICRC delegates, Mr. Pasquier clarified the institution's objectives in Central America for 1984.

In relation to ICRC action in Grenada, the delegate general was in *Cuba* from 2 to 6 November, where he met with President Fidel Castro and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During his stay, the delegate general had talks also with the President and the Secretary General of the Cuban Red Cross.

El Salvador

In November and December, ICRC delegates in El Salvador carried out 359 visits to places of detention in the capital and the provinces. They interviewed without witness and registered 199 persons detained for reasons of security. At Christmas, the ICRC delegates visited all the penal centres in the country and distributed to each detainee a parcel and recreation articles.

The ICRC's three tracing offices in San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana continued to receive each month several hundred visitors enquiring about missing relatives. During 1983, 3,124 cases of persons missing or presumed detained were brought to the attention of the ICRC.

As during the previous months, military operations considerably hindered ICRC assistance activities, especially in the eastern regions of the country. While 360 tons of food was distributed to 37,000 persons in 24 villages in the central zone, only 8 villages in departments to the east and inhabited by 17,000 persons received food relief.

The medical team based in San Salvador gave consultations in some fifty villages to the displaced civilian population. The medical team operating out of San Miguel gave medical consultations in 25 villages in the departments of Usulután, San Miguel and La Unión.

Besides these activities, the ICRC medical delegates took part in visits to places of detention. The medical team in San Salvador works in the centre and north of the country, the one in San Miguel in the eastern region.

Nicaragua

In November and December, the ICRC delegation in Managua continued its activities and distributed over 53 tons of relief supplies to displaced persons, mainly in the border areas with Honduras. Furthermore, 2,143 monthly food parcels were distributed to detainees' families in need. This assistance as a whole represented the amount of 155,000 Swiss francs.

Grenada

On 24 November, ICRC delegates on the island of Grenada visited the prison of Richmond Hill, where they saw 51 detainees, including 3 women. Furthermore, an ICRC doctor visited 5 wounded persons in the prison section of Saint George Hospital.

In October and November 1983, following the military intervention by a multinational force in Grenada, a team of 14 ICRC delegates from Geneva and the regional delegation in Bogota, visited and registered Cuban and Grenadian prisoners; it organized the repatriation of Cuban prisoners—wounded first—and of the mortal remains of 24 Cubans killed during the military operations (see the previous issue of the *Review*). At the end of November, the delegates from the regional delegation returned to Bogota from where they will go to Grenada at regular intervals.

Uruguay

From 21 November to 16 December, the ICRC carried out a new series of visits to places of detention in Uruguay. From 21 to 25 November, ICRC delegates visited the women's prison Punta de Rieles, where 109 detainees were being held; from 28 November to 9 December they visited the prison of Libertad, where they saw 669 detainees. They also visited 12 detainees at the armed forces central hospital, and one detainee at a psychiatric hospital.

All of these visits took place in accordance with normal ICRC procedure.

Asia

Missions from Geneva

Mr. Rudolf Jäckli, a member of the ICRC, carried out a mission to *Pakistan* from 21 to 27 November, during which he met with repre-

sentatives of the Government and the Pakistan Red Crescent Society in Peshawar and Islamabad. He visited also the Afghan refugee camp at Adisai.

From 6 to 10 December, Mr. Jean de Courten, ICRC delegate general for Asia and Oceania, visited *Indonesia*, where he spoke with the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces about the ICRC's protection activities in Indonesia and East-Timor.

After leaving Jakarta, Mr. de Courten visited *Japan* and the *Republic of Korea* at the invitation of the National Societies of the two countries. The ICRC delegate general met, as well as leaders of both National Societies, representatives of their Governments, with whom he reviewed ICRC activities in the world and in particular in Asia.

Thailand

With the end of the rainy season the ICRC delegates were again able to reach the refugee camps along the Khmer-Thai border to carry out their protection and assistance activities.

The wounded continued to be evacuated to the ICRC hospitals at Khao-I-Dang and Kab Cherng, to be treated by the medical teams made available by various National Red Cross Societies. In November and December, the hospital at Khao-I-Dang admitted 365 patients (including 126 war-wounded) and the hospital at Kab Cherng admitted 147 patients (including 48 war-wounded).

The ICRC also distributed relief, mainly to particularly vulnerable groups such as Vietnamese refugees. Such relief, comprising medicaments, paramedical supplies and food, was valued at 1.5 million Swiss francs in 1983.

For its part, the tracing office of the ICRC delegation in Bangkok transmitted 2,984 letters exchanged between the refugees and their families either abroad or in another camp. It also received 976 requests for news, carried out 97 transfers and reunited 54 families.

Kampuchea

The ICRC completed its assistance programme for five orphanages in the provinces of Prey Veng, Kandal and Pursat. This programme, which included the provision of sleeping mats, blankets and various relief supplies, amounted to approximately 85,000 Swiss francs. In December, ICRC delegates visited several orphanages in the regions of Kompong Cham and Kampot, to assess needs preparatory to a new assistance programme in 1984.

The ICRC also kept up in November and December, the weekly flights it organizes between Bangkok, Ho-Chi-Minh City and Phnom Penh, to convey medical and paramedical relief supplies to Kampuchea. In 1983, the total volume of relief transported was 26.1 tons, for the ICRC 13.6 tons and for other humanitarian organizations working in the country 12.5 tons.

Pakistan

The ICRC delegation in Pakistan continued its medical assistance for the Afghan victims of the armed clashes in the interior of their country.

The arrival of winter brought about a decrease in the number of war-wounded Afghans admitted to the ICRC surgical hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta: in November and December, 283 patients were admitted in Peshawar, compared to 450 in September and October. At the Peshawar hospital an ICRC team and a team made available by the Red Cross of the Federal Republic of Germany performed 424 operations and gave 1,508 consultations to outpatients during the last two months of 1983.

The hospital at Quetta, where operations are performed by an Italian Red Cross surgical team, admitted 139 wounded Afghans, performed 155 operations and gave 594 consultations to outpatients, during the same period.

A further first aid team of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, set up with the aid of the ICRC, started work at the beginning of December in Wana, South Waziristan, bringing to five the number of mobile teams evacuating the wounded from the Afghan border to the ICRC hospitals. These teams, financed by the ICRC, are currently based in Parachinar, Miram Shah, Chaman, Badini and Wana. In November and December, they gave first aid to 173 wounded and brought 93 others to the ICRC hospitals.

Furthermore, the prosthetic workshop in Peshawar produced 118 orthopaedic appliances and the paraplegic centre admitted 17 new patients, bringing to 77 the number of persons being treated.

Finally, 33 Afghans took the first aid course given by ICRC personnel. Since the beginning of the programme in February 1982, 330 Afghans have been taught first aid.

Indonesia

The annual series of visits to places of detention in Indonesia came to an end on 14 November, when a team of two ICRC delegates had

access to 7 places of detention, where they saw 51 detainees belonging to the category "Ex-G.30.S/PKI" (persons detained following the 1965 attempted coup d'Etat). From 20 January to 24 March 1983, 201 "Ex-G.30.S/PKI" detainees had been visited in 16 places of detention.

Philippines

From 3 October to 9 December, three ICRC teams visited 40 places of detention in the Philippines; they saw 340 security detainees ("public order violators"), including 45 women.

Burma

At the request of the French Government and with the agreement of all the parties concerned, the ICRC negotiated, as a neutral intermediary and for strictly humanitarian reasons, the release of a French couple held for several months by the Karen insurgents in Burma. On 25 November, the released couple was confided to three ICRC delegates based in Thailand, who then escorted them to the French embassy in Bangkok.

Middle East

Lebanon

The ICRC continued its activities to protect and assist civilian victims of the events in Tripoli, Beirut, the Chouf, the Bekaa and the south of the country.

In co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross, the ICRC on 17 December arranged the removal of 94 wounded Palestinians from Tripoli to Larnaca (Cyprus). The wounded, who had been examined by ICRC doctors, were embarked aboard the vessel "Appia" loaned by the Italian Government and marked for the occasion with the protective emblem of the Red Cross. Aboard the ship were two Italian doctors, four doctors and a female nurse of the "Palestinian Red Crescent", seven first-aiders from the Lebanese Red Cross and two doctors, three female nurses and a delegate from the ICRC. Upon arrival at Larnaca the wounded were conveyed to the airport by "Cyprus Red Cross" first-aiders and then flown to Egypt, Jordan and Yugoslavia for hospitalization.

Following that operation the Tripoli Islamic Hospital and the neighbouring Franco-Lebanese high school—which had been neutralized on 5 November by the ICRC—resumed their normal functions and the Red Cross flags were removed from the buildings. On the other hand, the ICRC delegates continued supplying the Tripoli hospitals and dispensaries with medical and paramedical supplies.

The ICRC medical personnel continued its regular distributions of medical supplies in the southern suburbs of Beirut, the “caza” d’Aley, the Upper Metn and the Bekaa. In the Chouf mountains an ICRC female nurse assessed the needs of several infirmaries and provided medical supplies. Medical supplies were also provided to the Baakline medical centre and a Nabatiyeh hospital.

ICRC medical assistance in Lebanon from 16 November to 20 December was valued at more than a million francs and included 590 units of blood (valued at 40,000 francs) provided by the Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Finland, France and Norway. Moreover, the field hospital provided by the Norwegian Red Cross was handed over to the “Palestinian Red Crescent” for use in Tripoli.

With the agreement of all parties concerned, the ICRC organized the evacuation from the encircled village of Deir-el-Kamar of displaced persons who had sought refuge there. This operation, carried out jointly with the Lebanese Red Cross, involved the conveyance of 5,130 people, in eight convoys, to Beirut and Saida, between 15 and 22 December. Seven of the convoys each consisted of a dozen buses and one of 485 private vehicles. The people taken to Beirut were received by their families or by a welfare committee.

The siege having been lifted, the ICRC ceased its relief action to Deir-el-Kamar on 31 December. From the beginning of the operation on 12 September, 21 convoys took 1,106 tons of food, fuel, blankets, kitchen utensils and cleaning products to the displaced persons in that locality.

Relief distributions continued also in other regions of Lebanon and in November and December totalled 1,710 tons (to a value of 370,000 francs) of which 1,016 tons went to the Chouf, 359 tons to Tripoli, 70 tons to Beirut and 242 tons to Upper Metn.

To provide protection to prisoners detained by the various armed forces present in Lebanon, the ICRC continued visiting them in accordance with its customary conditions.

On 15 November and 19 and 20 December, ICRC delegates visited 293 Syrian prisoners of war in Israel; one prisoner was repatriated for medical reasons.

On 26 November, two Israelis held by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, General Command, were seen by the ICRC.

On 1 December, ICRC delegates visited three Israeli prisoners of war in Syrian hands.

On 8 December, an American pilot captured by the Syrians four days earlier was seen by ICRC delegates in Damascus and he was able to send Red Cross messages to his family.

On 24 December, ICRC delegates went to the former women's prison near Nabatiyeh and saw 54 detainees.

On 26, 27 and 28 December, the Ansar camp was visited and 83 prisoners there were registered.

A number of prisoners who should have been included in the release of prisoners by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 24 November were not in fact released. Aware that in an operation on such a scale and carried out in so short a time errors were liable to occur, the ICRC has appealed to the Israeli Government to release these prisoners, consistent with the agreement.

Conflict between Iran and Iraq

The ICRC delegations in Baghdad and Teheran continued to carry out, as far as possible, the tasks devolving on them by virtue of the Geneva Conventions.

In *Iraq*, the ICRC delegates visited the prisoner-of-war camps each month. They also paid two visits to the civilian Iranian Kurds interned at Al Tash camp.

In *Iran*, the ICRC principal activity consisted in transmitting messages from Iraqi prisoners of war to their families. Visits to prisoner-of-war camps were suspended in Iran at the end of July 1983, as conditions were unsuitable for the work of the ICRC.

The plight of the civilian victims of the conflict continued to be of particular concern to the ICRC. Informed in December that Iranian cities had once again been bombed, the ICRC published a press release in which it stressed that civilians as such are not to be the object of attack or reprisals, and it appealed to the parties to the conflict to respect, at all times and in all places, this basic humanitarian rule.