

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**September-October 1988***Africa****Burundi/Rwanda**

The ICRC assisted more than 12 000 persons in northern Burundi following the outbreaks in August of violent ethnic disputes. Blankets, clothing, soap, cooking utensils and farming tools were distributed from mid-September to the affected population.

Relief materials were in part transported by truck from Uganda and in part purchased locally by the ICRC.

Distributions took place in the villages of Ntega and Marangara, near the border with Rwanda, where the recent clashes had occurred. Delegates distributed supplies first in the centres set up for displaced persons, then in the hills to which the population was gradually returning.

Furthermore, a delegate working for the ICRC Central Tracing Agency collected over 150 Red Cross messages in Burundi during the month of September. The messages were then forwarded to a colleague in Rwanda where some 50 000 refugees from Burundi had sought asylum. The first batch of messages from the refugees reached Burundi by mid-October.

Sudan

The ICRC maintained its efforts to implement the plan of action drawn up and proposed to the government and the SPLM/SPLA opposition movement in August. The Delegate General for Africa, Mr. P. Gassmann, travelled in mid-October to Nairobi, Kampala and Addis Ababa for discussions in this connection.

Mozambique

The ICRC continued to provide assistance to the provincial capitals, but was unable to resume its flights, interrupted on 19 July, to the areas

more directly affected by the conflict. Visits to security detainees awaiting trial or already sentenced also continued. In September and October ICRC delegates visited the prisons of Inhambane, Xai Xai and Tete.

Angola

During the two months under review, the ICRC delegation in Angola carried out seed distributions of maize, sorghum, millet, bean, soya and sunflower among the civilian population on the Planalto, mainly in the provinces of Bié, Huambo and Benguela. The operation, timed to coincide with the beginning of the rainy season, involved approximately 1,150 tonnes of seed and benefited about 300 000 persons.

Latin America

Nicaragua

In the conflict regions of Rio Coco Abajo and Llano Norte, the ICRC joined with the Nicaraguan Red Cross to help victims of the floods in north-eastern Nicaragua in August.

During the night from 21 to 22 October, Hurricane Joan cut a swathe of devastation across the country's Atlantic coast, destroying the town of Bluefields and with it the premises of the ICRC's sub-delegation there. The ICRC immediately began work to evacuate and assist the victims, in close co-operation with the National Society and the League. When the worst was over, the ICRC continued to aid the National Society by providing relief supplies and logistic support for the displaced population of Rama.

But for the interruption caused by the hurricane, the ICRC's regular activities continued normally, both visits to detainees (the Tipitapa prison in September and the prisons in Bluefields and Granada in October) and tracing and dissemination work.

Brazil

The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in conjunction with the "*Instituto de Pesquisa em Relacoes internacionais*" (IPRI) organized a symposium with ICRC participation for civilian and military officials from 17 to 19 October. The symposium, which took place in Brasilia, was held to promote implementation of international humanitarian law and to discuss the question of Brazil's accession to the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions. The opening ceremony, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was attended by the Head of the General

Staff of the Armed Forces, the Minister of Justice, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and foreign ambassadors.

The speakers' presentations gave rise to lively discussion with the senior civilian and military officials taking part in the symposium, which will be the subject of an IPRI publication.

Other activities

Security detainees are also visited in *Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Paraguay, Peru* and *Suriname* (prisoners held by the opposition).

Assistance programmes for the civilian population in *El Salvador* continued. In *Peru*, delegates, including a doctor and a nurse, went to conflict areas in the Departments of Huánuco and Apurímac to assess the medical needs of the people living there. In addition, a dissemination programme was set up in the Department of San Martín.

Finally, the regional delegates based in *Argentina, Colombia* and *Costa Rica* took part in various seminars, symposiums and commemorative ceremonies to mark the Movement's 125 anniversary, for example in *Granada, Haiti, Mexico, Panama* and *Paraguay*.

Asia

Afghan conflict

One of the key developments for the ICRC during the last two months in Afghanistan has been the opening of the ICRC hospital for war surgery in Kabul on 1 October. By the end of the month this hospital, with a current capacity of 50 beds, had admitted 43 patients, without counting those who did not need hospitalization; moreover, 94 operations had been performed by this date.

As regards detention, the first visit took place to a prison outside the capital; from 17 September to 1 October the delegates carried out a visit to the prison in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of the northern province of Balkh. In addition, they also visited, again for the first time, the Dar ul Tadib detention centre for minors in Kabul.

The ICRC delegates in Pakistan were also very busy conducting on-going surveys around nine first-aid posts along the Afghan border; they continued contacts with representatives from the various resistance movements and visited an increasing number of groups of detainees being held by the resistance. During the same period the two ICRC hospitals in Pakistan had a record intake of patients, with 278 admissions in Peshawar and 238 in Quetta.

Kampuchea conflict

Along the border between Kampuchea and Thailand, the ICRC delegates' main concern is the plight of the refugees in the camps administered by Democratic Kampuchea; they continue to be refused access to several of these camps where the state of the civilian population is reported to be disquieting. Negotiations in this connection took place with the Thai authorities and with Khmer spokesmen; intense consultations have also been going on with the UN specialized agencies.

Malaysia

After receiving the authorities' consent for a new series of visits to people detained under the Internal Security Act, from 12 September to 11 October ICRC delegates visited a total of 136 detainees in 11 places of detention in the peninsular and eastern part of Malaysia. The previous visit dated back to 1986.

Philippines

In the Philippines, visits to places of detention continued at regular intervals. In September and October the ICRC delegation visited 159 people imprisoned in 26 places of detention throughout the country. As regards relief supplies, a total of 8,100 people received ICRC aid, including 4,500 on the island of Mindanao. To these figures must be added the emergency relief supplies (rice and logistic support) which the ICRC provided to the National Society after the passage of hurricane Unsang, which devastated the archipelago from Mindanao to Manila.

Middle East

Iran/Iraq conflict

The period under review began well on 12 September with the ICRC repatriating a group of 72 disabled Iraqi prisoners of war whom Tehran had unilaterally decided to release. Negotiations for repatriation of all the conflict's prisoners of war, under Article 118 of the Third Convention (which provides for their repatriation without delay following the end of active hostilities), continued unabated both on the fringes of the UN-sponsored peace negotiations in Geneva and New York and in the capitals of the two countries themselves. In a *note verbale* dated 4 October, the ICRC made a solemn appeal to the two parties to notify the ICRC of all the POWs who had not yet been registered with a view to their repatriation, and urged them to proceed as soon as possible

with the priority repatriation of all sick and wounded POWs. The two parties finally decided to make a first step in this direction by releasing 25 sick or wounded POWs each; these prisoners were repatriated under ICRC auspices on 30 October. The Iranian prisoners involved were the first Iranian POWs to be repatriated from Iraq since November 1985. The captivity of all other POWs continues; ICRC delegates finished their fifth series of visits in Iraq on 20 October, whereas visits to Iraqi POWs in Iran are still suspended.

The ICRC also worked to assist Iraqi Kurds who had sought refuge in Turkey and, in larger numbers, in Iran. Surveys in the Iranian province of Western Azerbaidjan (6-9 September and 24-29 October) and in the Turkish region of Diyarbakir (21-24 September and 26 September-2 October) led to the formation of a relief convoy scheduled to leave Turkey for Iran on 28 October.

Yemen Arab Republic

The annual series of prison visits in the Yemen Arab Republic took place from 1 to 14 September. Some 3,330 prisoners were visited in nine places of detention.

Israel and the occupied territories

The ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories pursued their activities in connection with the events in the occupied territories since December 1987.

Lebanon

Despite the crisis over the presidential succession, the ICRC delegation continued its work, giving assistance and protection to a total of 21,500 people in September and 12,000 in October. A major medical relief operation was launched following the aerial bombardment of a dispensary on 21 October in Machgara, in the southern Bekaa valley. In addition, delegates visited 111 detainees in September and 120 in October. Finally, the delegation distributed to the Lebanese media a brief text on respect for the emblem.
