

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**November-December 1988***Africa****Sudan**

At the end of November the ICRC received authorization from the Sudanese Government and the necessary assurances from the SPLM/SPLA opposition movement to implement the plan of action which had been drawn up and flights began on 4 December. During the final month of the year, ICRC aircraft flew regular missions to Wau and Aweil in the zone under government control and to Akon and Yirol in the SPLA-controlled zone, taking off either from Khartoum, Kenya (Lokichokio) or Uganda (Entebbe).

A sub-delegation was opened in Wau as well as ICRC offices in Akon and Yirol. Here ICRC delegates began distributing food aid to those most in need (displaced persons, hospital patients and prisoners). Teams of veterinary surgeons also vaccinated livestock and medical supplies were provided for dispensaries.

Somalia

A team of ICRC delegates visited Garoe, Las Anod, Berbera and Burao in the north of the country at the end of November mainly to assess medical requirements. During December discussions continued with a view to setting up a programme of action in co-operation with the National Society.

Uganda

For the first time since the National Resistance Army (NRA) came to power, the ICRC received authorization to visit places of detention

under army jurisdiction. ICRC delegates visited eight places of detention in Kampala and in the east of the country in accordance with the institution customary criteria, between 17 November and 14 December. They interviewed without witnesses 135 detainees who come within the ICRC's terms of reference.

Material and food aid operations for displaced persons were also carried out in the district of Gulu and Soroti. In addition, some 2,000 Sudanese refugees were assisted with the agreement of the UNHCR in Kigtum.

Burundi

During the last two months of the year almost all the refugees had returned from Rwanda and were resettled in the hills from whence they came. The ICRC provided these destitute people with relief supplies to enable their resettlement. Moreover, beginning on 5 December, ICRC delegates carried out a series of visits to people detained because of the events. During these visits, which concluded at the beginning of January 1989, in accordance with the institution's customary criteria, the ICRC saw 78 detainees.

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. However an agreement in principle was reached on 5 December and flights should resume at the beginning of 1989. Visits to security detainees awaiting trial or already sentenced also continued. These visits were to Chimoio prison, in Manica province in November, and to Nampula prison (Nampula province) in December.

Angola

The ICRC distributed 1,446 tonnes of seeds to 90,600 families in the provinces of Huambo, Bié and Benguela. Following a three-month interruption, the ICRC delegation was able to resume its flights to Bailundo (Huambo province). Delegates also assessed the situation in Luena (the capital of Moxico province), Menongue (Cuando Cubango province) and Uige. In addition, delegates paid a second visit on 5 November to a Namibian prisoner of war being held in Luanda.

Latin America

As was the case in *Nicaragua* and *El Salvador*, security detainees were visited in *Chile*, *Colombia*, *Paraguay* and *Peru*. In *Cuba*, ICRC delegates had discussions with the authorities, with particular reference to the series of visits made in June 1988 to security detainees in Cuban prisons. They also paid another visit to the South African prisoner of war being held in Cuba.

Programmes to help the civilian population were pursued in *Peru*, *El Salvador* and *Nicaragua*, where logistic support continued to be provided to the Nicaraguan Red Cross to assist it in efforts to aid the victims of Hurricane Joan. The activities of the ICRC in this connection were described in the previous issue of the *International Review of the Red Cross*.

ICRC regional delegates based in *Argentina*, *Colombia* and *Costa Rica* also went on various missions to *Bolivia*, *Brazil*, the *Dominican Republic*, *Mexico* and *Panama*.

The delegate-general and the regional delegate based in Colombia attended the meeting of the National Societies of the Americas which was held in *Caracas* from 9 to 11 December.

Asia

Afghan Conflict

The war-surgery hospital in Kabul opened by the ICRC in October 1988 has been coping with growing needs. Although the 65 patients admitted in December were less than the 73 arrivals in November, the number of operations performed rose from 152 to 205. A new building with a capacity of 60 to 70 patients was built in December, bringing the hospital's total capacity to 120 beds. The two ICRC hospitals in Pakistan (in Peshawar and Quetta) also admitted a growing number of patients and had to take appropriate measures to deal with the situation.

In the area of detention, following an ICRC visit to Mazar I Sharif prison in September, delegates visited another provincial place of detention, in Herat, the capital of the province of the same name. The visit took place from 12 to 19 December and they had access to sentenced prisoners. The ICRC also made a second visit from 19 November to 12 December to Pul-I-Charki prison in Kabul where a large amount of aid in the form of food, hygiene requisites and leisure

articles was distributed. On 17 November, delegates also distributed aid to minors detained in the Dar Ul Tadib centre in Kabul. The ICRC's contacts with representatives of the various opposition movements have enabled it to visit a growing number of people held by them. Since November, the institution has been able to expand its tracing activities, notably the exchange of Red Cross messages between detainees and their families.

During the period under review, the ICRC gained increased access to the provinces of Afghanistan. Delegates were able to go to six different regions of the country to assess the needs—mostly medical—of the conflict victims there and to set up permanent structures.

Conflict in Kampuchea

The ICRC remained greatly concerned about civilians living in border camps under the authority of Democratic Kampuchea. Although the ICRC has a mandate to assist the displaced victims of the conflict in Kampuchea living on the Thai border, the institution's delegates continued to be denied access to several camps in which displaced Kampucheans are living. Those camps, which are directly exposed to the fighting, also remained closed to the UN agencies working in the area. The ICRC assiduously continued to make representations with a view to gaining access to the people concerned. To this end, the delegate-general for Asia and the Pacific went to Paris on early November to meet Prince Sihanouk, one of the leaders of the coalition opposing the government in Phnom Penh, to express the institution's concern. The delegate-general then travelled to Bangkok where he had detailed discussions with the Thai authorities on the same subject. Nevertheless, the year ended without any progress being made.

The ICRC did, however, have the satisfaction of being able to organize its first family reunification in the People's Republic of Kampuchea itself. In late December, the ICRC's Bangkok and Phnom Penh delegations repatriated a 16-year-old Khmer youth who had been taken by boat to Thailand against his will. In accordance with his wishes, he was returned to his parents in Kampot.

Viet Nam

During the period under review, the ICRC's activities in Viet Nam underwent several changes. On 7 November, the institution for the last time organized a repatriation flight from Viet Nam to Taiwan jointly with the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM). There

were 110 passengers on board, bringing to 6,198 the number of people who have been repatriated under the programme since the first flight was organized in 1976. The programme will henceforth be run by the ICM.

The ICRC instituted a new type of activity in late November when it sent an orthopaedic technician to help set up a rehabilitation centre in Ho Chi Minh City for people disabled by war. Under an agreement with the Vietnamese authorities, the centre will be run by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Disabled Soldiers and Social Affairs and the ICRC in co-operation with the Red Cross of Viet Nam.

Middle East

Lebanon

The abduction of ICRC delegate Peter Winkler on 17 November in Sidon by an armed group that held him captive for thirty days resulted in a cutback in the activities of the delegation in Lebanon. The serious threats made against ICRC delegates in the days following Peter Winkler's release on 16 December then compelled the ICRC to repatriate its delegates and suspend its activities in Lebanon temporarily from 19 December. As the year came to an end there was some hope that the ICRC would soon be able to resume the humanitarian work of protection and assistance that it had been carrying out for victims of conflict for more than twenty years.

Israel and the occupied territories

In Israel the end of the year brought no abatement in the "intifada", now in its second year, nor in the severity of the measures taken to suppress it. The ICRC therefore sustained the level of its activities in the occupied territories. It pursued its visits to persons who had been arrested because of the events to check on their conditions of internment and, where necessary, supplied them with material assistance. The ICRC medical team continued to carry out regular surveys of the medical facilities in the area, to visit people who had been wounded during demonstrations and to provide support for local branches of the Red Crescent. For the time being, direct assistance to the civilian population was confined to *ad hoc* distribution of relief supplies to families whose homes had been demolished. However, the delegation was monitoring the situation closely. Further representations, both oral

and in writing, were made to the authorities to remind them of their obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians.

Iran/Iraq conflict

The section on the conflict between Iran and Iraq in the previous issue of the *Review* ended on an optimistic note, with the simultaneous repatriation of twenty-five sick, wounded and elderly prisoners of war by both sides, and with the signing at ICRC headquarters in Geneva of an agreement between Iran and Iraq to repatriate all sick and wounded prisoners of war. However, the exchange of prisoners unfortunately had to be suspended on 27 November after three flights involving only 155 Iraqi and 56 Iranian prisoners; at the end of the year the situation was still deadlocked. Meanwhile, the delegation in Baghdad continued its visits to camps for prisoners of war and civilian internees.
