

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**January-February 1989***Africa****Mozambique**

On 4 January, after a suspension of more than five months, the ICRC was able to resume its flights in the country, starting with the provinces of Manica and Sofala. Delegates flew to several isolated districts to assess the needs of the civilian population there and to provide people with the relief they required. Heavy rains, however, repeatedly prevented the planes from landing and impeded the delegates' work.

ICRC delegates continued visiting security detainees held by the Ministry of Security who were either awaiting trial or had already been sentenced. In January, they visited Quelimane Prison, and in February they went to Temba (Cabo Delgado Province), Lichinga and Cuamba (Niassa Province) Prisons. They began visiting prisons in the country on 27 June 1988 and have now been to all the detention centres in the capital and the provinces under the authority of the Ministry of Security.

South Africa/Angola/Namibia

On 9 and 13 January and on 6 February the ICRC delegation in Pretoria visited an Angolan pilot captured after a forced landing in Namibia on 13 December 1988. The three visits were carried out in accordance with the ICRC's customary criteria.

The ICRC had already paid an initial visit to the pilot on 20 December 1988.

The ICRC delegation in Luanda visited one Namibian prisoner of war on 19 January.

Sudan

Despite several interruptions due to security problems, the ICRC's operations in the south of the country continued as they had begun on 4 December 1988. ICRC aircraft flew to Wau and Aweil in the zone under government control and to Akon and Yirol in SPLA-controlled territory, taking off from Khartoum, Lokichokio (Kenya) or Entebbe (Uganda). In Wau and Aweil, the ICRC distributed food, blankets and soap to persons displaced because of the conflict. It also provided relief to hospital patients and to detainees in Wau Prison. In Yirol and Akon, the ICRC vaccinated 55,000 head of cattle, which is the local population's main means of subsistence. Medical supplies were distributed to dispensaries and hospitals.

Somalia

On 20 February a team of ICRC delegates, including a doctor, a sanitary engineer and an administrator, set up a base in Berbera, in the north of the country, in order to carry out a precise assessment of the local medical infrastructure and requirements.

Uganda

On 9 January, an ICRC convoy of three vehicles on its way from Soroti to Amuria in eastern Uganda for a fourth consecutive day of relief distributions to displaced persons was attacked by armed men. A member of the Uganda Red Cross was killed and an ICRC delegate was wounded. The ICRC's assistance operation in Amuria was temporarily suspended after the attack. Some 11,000 people had already been registered, and an operation to provide some 58,000 people with kitchen utensils and soap had begun. However, the ICRC continued its relief programme for displaced civilians around the town of Gulu in northern Uganda, distributing food, blankets and kitchen utensils and vaccinating against measles. The ICRC also went on visiting places of detention throughout the country. A second series of visits to army detention centres began on 20 February (the first series took place in November and December 1988).

Liberia

The ICRC regional delegate based in Lagos and an ICRC doctor visited ten security detainees in Monrovia Central Prison at the end of February.

Latin America

Peru

After an interruption of over one year (January 1987), the ICRC had been able to resume its activities in the Ayacucho region, an area in a state of emergency, in March 1988 (visits to places of detention and ad-hoc assistance operations). At the end of June, however, the necessary authorizations had once again been suspended. The ICRC's repeated efforts to obtain permission to resume work finally succeeded, and the Ayacucho sub-delegation was reopened on 1 March. The delegates' first task will be to provide material and medical assistance to civilian victims of the violence and to launch a dissemination campaign among the armed forces, the police and the civilian population in the area.

Paraguay

Following the *coup d'état* on 3 February, the ICRC delegates based in Buenos Aires immediately went to Asunción to take stock of the situation there and to discuss the details of further ICRC action in the country with the new Paraguayan authorities. They also considered the possibility of providing support to the National Society. The delegates made one last visit to a prisoner of Chilean origin, Mr. Mella Latorre, who was released soon afterwards, on 17 February, after nine years in detention.

Other countries

Visits to security detainees were carried out in Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Suriname.

The South African prisoner of war held in Cuba was also visited once again on 23 February

On 11 January, 234 Haitian nationals who had been shipwrecked off the Cuban coast were repatriated under the auspices of the ICRC and in co-operation with the Red Cross Societies of Cuba and Haiti.

Assistance programmes on behalf of the civilian population continued in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru.

The regional delegates based in Argentina, Colombia and Costa Rica went on numerous missions to Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and Suriname.

Asia

Afghan Conflict

At the end of 1988 the ICRC had stepped up its operation in Afghanistan. Activities further increased in January 1989, and surveys were carried out in the eastern provinces of Paktika and Kunar where two new first-aid posts were opened. In December 1988 and January 1989 a team of ICRC delegates spent approximately two months in Herat to assess humanitarian needs. In Kabul, the ICRC delegation carried on its work, and during the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in February some 40 expatriates went on performing war surgery, protecting vulnerable groups of people—in particular detainees in Pul-I-Charki Prison—and carrying out tracing activities, which are an extremely important part of the ICRC's humanitarian task.

On 26 February, an aircraft chartered by the ICRC flew from Pakistan to Kabul carrying the mortal remains of nine crew members and passengers of a plane that had crashed in Pakistani territory.

In Pakistan, the two ICRC hospitals in Peshawar and Quetta continued treating victims of the Afghan conflict. Delegates based in Pakistan also carried out a number of surveys in Logar (south of Kabul) and Wardak Provinces.

Kampuchean Conflict

The beginning of 1989 saw increased diplomatic contact between countries in the region, especially between Thailand and Viet Nam. This involved discussions centred mainly on the search for a political solution to the Kampuchean conflict. However, hopes of the parties directly involved in the conflict reaching an agreement in the same length of time seem more remote. In view of a possible negotiated solution, the international organizations are increasing their initiatives to ensure that the Khmer civilian population displaced along the border have an orderly and internationally guaranteed safe return to their country.

Another cause for concern is the fact that the ICRC and other organizations have no access to certain camps under the control of Democratic Kampuchea. And yet, in the midst of such gloom, Otrao Camp was reopened on 28 January to delegates of the ICRC and other international organizations. Some 6,000 were found there (as opposed to 16,500 several months previously).

A third major worry continues to be the violence within the camps, especially in Site 2, which can be attributed to the steady deterioration in the quality of life.

Viet Nam

On 4 January 1989, and for the third time since 1979, the ICRC had access to Chinese prisoners held in Viet Nam. Ten out of the 12 people visited had been seen previously in September 1987. Between 11 and 19 January, however, members of the Hong Kong delegation made a series of visits to 40 Vietnamese prisoners held in China; a further 28 prisoners were registered.

Between 13 and 19 February the Deputy Delegate General made an official visit to the Vietnamese Socialist Republic, where he met senior members of the National Society. Meetings were also held with several high-ranking officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Labour and the Interior. An agreement was signed with the Labour Ministry for the production of orthopaedic components in Ho Chi Minh City to help war disabled. The ICRC centre was officially opened on 18 February.

East Timor

During the pre-harvest "lean" period in January, an ICRC medical team spent three weeks in East Timor assessing the medical and nutritional situation in five of the island's districts. Surveys of this kind have been made on an annual basis since 1985.

While on the visit the ICRC did not come across any conditions requiring emergency action. Nevertheless, an ICRC nurse based in Bili will monitor the situation as it develops. In addition, a sanitation programme, set up towards the end of 1988 and involving 11 villages, is being continued.

Middle East

Lebanon

It will be recalled that on 20 December 1988, following the serious threats made against its delegates on mission in Lebanon, the ICRC was forced to suspend its humanitarian activities in the country and to repatriate all its Swiss staff. The ICRC immediately embarked upon a

series of representations and contacts in an effort to have the threats withdrawn unequivocally and credibly. In view of the assurances received concerning safety guarantees for the delegates in their work, the ICRC decided to resume its activities in Lebanon step by step, as of 6 February.

During its seven-week absence the ICRC maintained its administrative and operational infrastructure in Lebanon through its local staff. It also continued to support the activities of the Lebanese Red Cross by providing medical and relief supplies for distribution to the hospitals and civilians most in need.

Israel and the occupied territories

Tension in the Israeli-occupied territories has not eased with the beginning of 1989. The ICRC has therefore sustained its efforts to protect and help the victims of the disturbances.

On 4 February, whilst negotiating to have an ambulance admitted to a camp in the Gaza Strip, an ICRC delegate was wounded in the leg by a bullet fired by an Israeli soldier. The delegate was repatriated to Switzerland where he is recovering.

The ICRC continued its dialogue with the Israeli authorities in order to obtain their assurance that ICRC delegates will enjoy the safety conditions necessary for the accomplishment of their task and that the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law will be better respected in the occupied territories.

Iraq-Iran

Whilst the arrangements for the repatriation of all Iranian and Iraqi prisoners of war remain in deadlock, the beginning of the year nevertheless saw, on two occasions, the unilateral release and repatriation of sick or wounded prisoners of war. Thus 255 Iranian prisoners were released on 23 and 24 January and 233 Iraqis on 21, 22 and 23 February. The ICRC organized their transport and maintained its efforts to find an overall solution to this thorny problem. In addition, the Baghdad delegation began the first of the annual series of visits to camps holding Iranian prisoners of war and continued its visits to civilian internee camps.
