

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**March-April 1989***Africa****Uganda**

On 13 March, the ICRC delegation was able to resume the assistance which had been suspended in the region of Soroti since mid-January. Under the agricultural programme, some 125,000 people who could no longer produce enough food for their needs were given hoes, bean seed (200 tonnes) and sorghum seed (100 tonnes). Relief distributions to displaced civilians in the Gulu district, interrupted on 10 March, were resumed in mid-April. Food, blankets, soap and kitchen utensils were given to some 10,000 people.

Visits to detainees in army-controlled places of detention and police stations were extended to the provinces.

**Angola**

During the period under review, the ICRC had to cope with a rapid deterioration in the nutritional state of the people living on the Planalto. A food aid programme was immediately started: at the end of March, more than 2,000 tonnes of food were distributed to about 200,000 people in the provinces of Huambo, Benguela and Bie. The ICRC is also preparing to return to the province of Cunene; work on the dispensary at N'Giva is going well.

**Mozambique**

On 14 March, a team composed of one member of the Mozambique Red Cross and three ICRC delegates was detained by combatants of

RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance Movement) who attacked the town of Memba in Nampula Province. RENAMO representatives at once assured the ICRC that all four persons would be set free in a safe place, and this was done two weeks later.

Fortunately, this incident did not greatly affect the ICRC's activities in the country. After the provinces of Manica and Sofala, the ICRC delegates gained access to Nahamacca (Nampula Province). Following attacks, the ICRC and the Mozambique Red Cross had to step up their activities at Inhassunge (Zambesia Province). As landing strips dried out after the floods earlier in the year, the ICRC made the necessary arrangements to reach other victims of the conflict in areas controlled by the government but difficult to reach, or in areas not completely under the control of the government armed forces.

### **Southern Sudan**

In the period under review, the ICRC intensified its relief work for victims of the conflict in Southern Sudan. A few weeks before the rainy season made some areas inaccessible, the ICRC concentrated its efforts on places difficult to reach or where other organizations were unable to work. At the beginning of April, the flight plan for ICRC aircraft could be extended to include six more destinations, bringing the total number of zones covered to 18, in regions controlled by the Sudanese Government or by the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army). By mid-April, 150 tonnes of food were being ferried daily by air, some of it being distributed immediately to the groups most at risk, the rest being used to form reserves in regions that the rains would cut off from the outside.

Medical activities also went ahead. The existing medical infrastructure was regularly supplied with essential equipment and medicines. The vaccination programme covered 50,000 people at Wau, 20,000 at Aweil and 30,000 in the SPLA-controlled area. The surgical hospital at Lokichokio (Kenya) continued to treat casualties evacuated from Sudan (208 patients admitted during April).

About 350,000 head of cattle were vaccinated by the ICRC veterinary surgeons. In Wau and Aweil, seed and hoes were distributed to 10,000 families, and 20 tonnes of seed were given out in the zone under SPLA control. Some 35,000 recently displaced persons received blankets, mosquito nets and kitchen utensils worth 500,000 Swiss francs, and several thousand families were provided with fishing tackle.

## **South Africa/Angola/Cuba/Namibia**

An exchange of prisoners took place on 31 March between Cuba, South Africa and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). One South African prisoner in Cuban hands, eleven Angolans and three Cubans held by UNITA, and one Angolan pilot held in South Africa were released. The ICRC had had regular access, in accordance with its criteria, to the Angolan pilot and the South African prisoner. The delegate based at Oshakati (Namibia) visited, from 4 April, some combatants of PLAN (the armed branch of SWAPO—South West Africa People's Organisation) captured by the army. On 26 April these prisoners were released and handed over to the forces of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG).

## **Latin America**

### **Peru**

The last issue of the Review mentioned that the ICRC had been authorized to resume its activities in the areas under a state of emergency. During the period under review, the delegation made frequent representations to the authorities and local military commanders to arrange for the practical implementation of the March agreement in principle.

Delegates resumed two assistance programmes—one material and one medical—in Ayacucho. In the Department of Apurímac, a programme to prevent infectious diseases was set up with the help of a Peruvian doctor who speaks Quechua.

### **Suriname**

Following the incidents which occurred on 23 April in the village of Pogikron, some 150 km south of Paramaribo, the delegate based in Bogotá who covers Suriname conducted a survey with the Suriname Red Cross of the situation in Pogikron. About 100 people who had lost their property during the events received food aid.

## **Nicaragua**

On 17 April, the Nicaraguan authorities released 1,894 former members of the National Guard. The delegation registered the identities of those released and gave them clothing and shoes. The ICRC also paid their travel expenses to various regional centres from where they returned to their places of origin.

## **El Salvador**

On 21 April, the head of delegation was received by President-elect Cristiani, who expressed a desire for continuity in his government's relations with the ICRC.

In early April, delegates were once again able to go to the Departments of Morazán and San Miguel, access to which had been made difficult since the beginning of the year by military operations.

## **Asia**

### **Afghan Conflict**

The fierce fighting that broke out round the city of Jalalabad brought an unusually large number of casualties to the ICRC surgical hospital in Peshawar (Pakistan) during March (440 admissions, as compared with 284 in January and 204 in February). The ICRC at once reinforced the system for evacuating the wounded from along the frontier, sending four extra ambulances to the first-aid post at Landi Kotal and setting up a mobile medical unit at Spin Shah, on Afghan territory.

In the period under review, the delegates based in Pakistan undertook numerous missions into several Afghan provinces (Kandahar, Kunar, Paktika, Nangarhar, Logar, Wardak and Zabul). In the course of these missions they were able to visit hundreds of prisoners held by the opposition in various places and to contact its local and regional leaders.

From mid-March onwards, an aircraft chartered by the ICRC made twice-weekly flights between Peshawar and Kabul, carrying medical equipment and relief supplies. A team of ICRC delegates based in the Afghan capital travelled to Mazar I Sharif to visit the main prison for

the second time since October 1988. The team then went to Sibargan, where it visited the prison there for the first time. In Kabul itself, the delegates continued their medical work (surgical hospital, orthopaedic centre and dispensaries), Tracing Agency activities (more than 1,500 Red Cross messages exchanged since the beginning of the year) and visits to persons detained in Pul I Charkhi prison, to whom they gave toilet articles and food.

### **Kampuchea Conflict**

In early March, an emergency plan was set up following heavy shelling near Site 2, the main camp in the border area. The ICRC delegates, in co-operation with UNBRO (United Nations Border Relief Operation) evacuated the wounded from the dispensaries and pregnant women to Khao-I-Dang Hospital, while some 5,000 other people (the elderly, children and disabled persons) were taken to an evacuation site further away from the border.

The ICRC reminded the authorities that the civilian status of the camps along the border must be respected and safer areas found for displaced persons. It continued to express concern regarding the situation of the civilian population under the control of Democratic Kampuchea and pursued its efforts to have these people moved to sites accessible to the international organizations.

## **Middle East**

### **Lebanon**

Violence erupted once again in Lebanon on 14 March. Intensive and indiscriminate shelling of urban areas resulted in a great many civilian casualties. Hospitals were badly damaged and much of Beirut was left without water and electricity.

In view of the deteriorating situation, the ICRC delegation in Lebanon launched appeals on 14 and 28 March and held a press conference on 5 April in which it called urgently upon all the parties concerned to respect the principles of international humanitarian law and spare civilians, their property, and medical establishments, vehicles and personnel. On 14 April, the ICRC renewed this appeal from

Geneva. In addition, the Director of Operations and the delegate-general for the Middle East travelled to Damascus and Lebanon, where they met Syrian authorities and the Lebanese parties engaged in the shelling. These contacts were aimed at obtaining authorization for humanitarian measures and appealing to them to respect the provisions of humanitarian law which protect civilians and medical centres.

Some 1,500 families living near the various front lines received food and other material assistance (family parcels, blankets and cooking utensils).

The delegation was able to resume its visits to prisoners, which had been suspended since October 1988. From 6 to 13 March, delegates visited four places of detention where they saw 92 prisoners, registering 64 of them for the first time.

### **Iran/Iraq**

With no progress being made towards an agreement to repatriate all the Iranian and Iraqi prisoners of war, the ICRC made a fresh series of representations to Iran and Iraq. On 31 March and 3 April, a memorandum was submitted to the permanent missions in Geneva. At the same time, talks were held with a number of representatives of the two countries. In addition, the delegate-general went to Baghdad from 6 to 10 April and to Tehran in early May.

On 10 April, 66 Iraqi prisoners of war were repatriated under ICRC auspices.

The delegation in Baghdad continued to regularly visit the Iranian prisoners of war and civilian internees to which it has access. From 26 to 31 March, delegates also visited the Khuzistani civilian internees of Iranian origin in the Missan region, to which the ICRC was allowed to return in December 1988 after an interruption of two years.

### **Israel and the occupied territories**

There were further violent clashes in the territories occupied by Israel. A particularly grave incident occurred on 13 April in the village of Nahalin when five persons were killed and several dozen others injured. The ICRC made known its concern about these tragic events in a firm public declaration.

During the period under review, the ICRC contacted the Israeli authorities on a growing number of occasions to urge them to put an end to practices which breach the Geneva Conventions. On 17 March, for example, the delegate-general for the Middle East met with Mr. Itzhak Rabin, the Israeli Minister of Defence.

In their work in the field, delegates concentrated on medical activities. Often working under difficult conditions, they endeavoured to ensure that people injured in the disturbances could be taken to hospital without delay. Visits to people detained in connection with the events were continued.

### **Jordan**

The Deputy Director of Operations went to Jordan from 11 to 14 April to renew the 1978 agreement allowing the ICRC to visit persons detained for security reasons. He had talks with several officials including Mr. Issam Jundi, Mr. Nassouh Mohieddin and Prince Al Hassan.

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