

Official visits to the ICRC

● The Head of the Spanish Government

The Head of the Spanish Government, **Mr. Felipe González**, visited the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross on 7 June 1988, and was received by the institution's President, Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, and several members of the Committee. The Spanish Prime Minister was accompanied by Mr. Javier Solana, Minister for Culture and government spokesman. The Secretary General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr. Pär Stenbäck, and the President of the Spanish Red Cross, Mr. Leocadio Marín, also attended.

In a welcoming speech, the ICRC President thanked the Prime Minister for the support Spain had given the ICRC. Mr. González informed him that the Spanish Parliament had been presented with a proposal to ratify the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, and he hoped that Spain would soon be able to ratify these two humanitarian instruments.

Finally Mr. González and Mr. Sommaruga continued talks they began at their first official meeting in Madrid in March, concerning the operational activities of the ICRC worldwide.

● The President of the Republic of the Philippines

The President of the Republic of the Philippines, **Mrs. Corazón C. Aquino**, visited on 14 June 1988 the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross where she was received by Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, the institution's President, and by several members of the Committee. Mrs. Aquino was accompanied by Senator Aquilino Jr. Pimentel and the Presidential Spokesman, the Hon. Teodoro Benigno.

The Secretary General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Mr. Pär Stenbäck, was also present during the visit.

In his welcoming address, the President of the ICRC warmly thanked Mrs. Aquino for supporting the entire work of the ICRC in the Philippines (visits to detainees, help for displaced persons, dissemination) and for according the institution all the facilities necessary for carrying out its mandate.

In her reply, Mrs. Aquino thanked the ICRC for its notable work in her country. She stressed the noble dimension of the ICRC's neutrality, a neutrality resolute and clear of compromise, guided by those absolute principles that protect the dignity and foster the well-being of man.

The Swiss Federal Government in Bern took the opportunity of President Aquino's visit to donate one million Swiss francs to the ICRC's Emergency Appeal for its activities in the Philippines.

● **The Secretary-General of the United Nations**

Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, visited on 6 July 1988 the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross, where he met Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, the institution's President, and several members of the Committee.

Mr. de Cuéllar and Mr. Sommaruga made speeches in which they drew attention to both organizations' ceaseless endeavour to limit the use of force. They pointed out how necessary it was to encourage the world's States to become party to the instruments of international humanitarian law, in particular the 1977 Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

Both stressed that it was vital to maintain frequent contact between the headquarters of the two organizations and between their staff in the field, who over the years have built up a complementary relationship of mutual co-operation without in any way sacrificing their respective independence.
