

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**May-June 1988***Africa****Ethiopia**

At the beginning of June the ICRC was compelled to put an end to its protection and assistance operations in aid of the victims of drought and conflict in the provinces of Eritrea, Tigray, Gondar and Wollo. In the interest of these victims, the ICRC sought agreement from the donor governments to transfer its foodstocks and logistic means in Ethiopia to other organizations. This was done after the Ethiopian authorities had confirmed the decisions conveyed to the ICRC in April and May and forced the ICRC to withdraw all its expatriate staff involved in the assistance operation. The ICRC nevertheless maintained a presence in Ethiopia to continue its activities on behalf of Somali prisoners of war. This aspect of its work, which falls within the Geneva Conventions, had not been called in question by the Ethiopian Government.

Somalia

Following the agreement reached between the Somali and Ethiopian authorities on 3 April, the ICRC offered its services to both governments with a view to taking part, as a neutral intermediary, in the repatriation of prisoners of war and other captured persons. On 24 May, the Somali Government agreed to the ICRC's proposal, and discussions took place in June to decide on the practical procedures for visits to the prisoners and for their registration and repatriation. A team of delegates left Geneva on 28 June to begin visiting Somali prisoners of war and civilian internees in early July.

Fighting was reported in the north of the country. The ICRC also sent to Mogadishu a team of delegates, including a doctor. On 9 June, the team visited Garoe and Anod, in the north of the country. An ICRC doctor went on a round of the hospitals in the capital, making arrangements for the delivery of medical supplies and for an increase in local staff to deal with the influx of wounded.

Sudan

On 7 May the ICRC Director of Operations was granted an audience by the Sudanese Prime Minister, H. E. Mr. Sadek el Mahdi, during which the ICRC's plan of action in the south of the country was discussed. All the parties involved having agreed to this plan, an initial team of delegates went to Wau in mid-June.

Mozambique

Following the resumption, on 23 April, of ICRC activities on behalf of the civilian population, flights were made to eight different places in Sofala Province during the two months under review. In each of these places, surveys preceded distributions of material, food and medical supplies, as required. Despite all their efforts to obtain the agreement of the parties concerned, by the end of this period the ICRC delegates had still not been able to gain access to other provinces—excepting their capitals.

The higher authorities of Mozambique gave their consent for ICRC visits to security detainees awaiting trial or already sentenced, and on 27 June a team of delegates was able to begin visiting prisoners held by the Ministry of Security.

Latin America**Cuba**

For the first time, a team of ICRC delegates made a series of visits to security detainees in Cuban jails. These visits took place after an agreement had been reached between Cuban President Fidel Castro and ICRC President Cornelio Sommaruga during Mr. Sommaruga's visit to Havana in April. The ICRC delegates visited 395 security detainees in 12 places of detention.

Peru

After an interruption of more than one year, the ICRC delegation was able to resume its activities in the emergency zone of Ayacucho (visits to places of detention and ad hoc provision of assistance). At the end of June, however, after three months of ICRC presence in the area, the authorizations enabling the delegates to work there were

suspended. ICRC activities (such as visits to persons detained by the Ministry of Justice under the antiterrorist law, material and medical assistance to detainees, aid to families most in need and assistance programmes for the civilian population) continued in Lima and in other regions of Peru, with a number of restrictions, however, regarding access to detainees held by the Ministry of the Interior.

Other activities

The ICRC also visited security detainees in *Chile*, *Nicaragua* and *El Salvador*.

It carried on its assistance programmes for the civilian population in *Nicaragua* and *El Salvador*. In El Salvador, in addition to its medical and public health programmes, the ICRC organized a new agricultural programme and several ad hoc food distributions to alleviate the effects of the drought that had struck the country in late 1987. From mid-April to mid-May, it provided maize seed, fertilizer and insecticides to 1,251 families. In *Guatemala*, the ICRC delegation continued making surveys in various provinces, and in some cases it provided displaced civilians with blankets and basic medicaments.

Missions were carried out in *Bolivia*, *Haiti* (since May the ICRC no longer has a delegate permanently stationed there), *Panama* and *Paraguay*, where the ICRC opened an office run by a local employee.

Asia

Afghan conflict

Afghanistan

ICRC delegates completed the first part of their visit to Pul-I-Charki prison, where they had access, in accordance with customary ICRC criteria, to detainees held by the Afghan Ministry of the Interior. Some of the detainees filled in Red Cross messages to be forwarded to their families.

Activities went on at the Kabul orthopaedic centre, as did the assistance programmes for seven Afghan Red Crescent dispensaries and four civilian hospitals in the capital. The ICRC also continued setting up its future surgical hospital in Kabul and organized a nursing course for about 60 Afghan employees. An initial medical survey was made in Herat at the end of May.

Pakistan

During May and June ICRC delegates made several visits to Afghan prisoners held by the resistance. Discussions continued with a view to visiting all persons detained by the Afghan opposition.

Occupancy was extremely high during the period under review at the ICRC hospitals in Peshawar and particularly in Quetta, where 475 wounded were admitted (as compared to 275 in Peshawar), as a result of the fighting that broke out in the province of Zabul and in Kandahar. A third surgical team and a nurse were sent to Pakistan at the end of May to help the hospital staff cope with the increased number of wounded.

Kampuchea Conflict

The ICRC carried on its activities and representations on behalf of the civilian population on the Khmer-Thai border and of persons detained by the parties to the conflict.

The trend observed over the past few months was confirmed in May and June: none of the civilian camps (sheltering approximately 300,000 people) along the border were directly affected by the hostilities. Inside the camps, however, whereas incidents involving Thai soldiers were relatively few and far between, violence among the camp population reached a climax, particularly at Site 2, where tension ran high on account of the latent insecurity and overcrowding. The ICRC continued requesting that this huge camp be divided into smaller units. Following an agreement between the UNHCR and the Thai authorities, a new camp, called Ban Tat, was set up to the south of Site 2 for all newly arrived Vietnamese land refugees and boat people. The camp was opened in May and was providing shelter for 3,200 boat people by the end of June. All the Vietnamese refugees at Site 2 (approximately 5,400) not accepted by a host country will be transferred to this new camp. In the four camps controlled by Democratic Kampuchea and accessible to the ICRC, working conditions were still far from satisfactory.

Despite regular representations to the authorities concerned, during the period under review the ICRC had still not visited any of the persons interned within the context of the Kampuchea conflict.

Medical activities were continued by the three ICRC surgical teams working at Khao-I-Dang.

The Polish Red Cross medical team working under the ICRC's responsibility at Kampot (Democratic Kampuchea) Provincial Hospital

continued caring for wounded soldiers and civilians and training Khmer doctors and nurses.

Philippines

In May and June, the ICRC continued its activities in the Philippines, visiting persons detained in connection with insurgency-related incidents and following *coup* attempts, both in the provinces and in Metro Manila (660 persons visited during the first half of 1988 in more than 50 places of detention). The ICRC also pursued its medical and material assistance programme for persons displaced on account of the events, mainly on Mindanao, but also in Luzon and the Visayas. During the first six months of 1988, 76,601 displaced people received such assistance. The first seminar on international humanitarian law for about 60 Filipino army officers was organized by the ICRC in May, with the participation of two specialists from Geneva.

Middle-East

Israel and the occupied territories

In May and June, ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories continued their activities in connection with the events that had been affecting the occupied territories since December 1987, visiting persons arrested on account of those events, checking on conditions of internment and providing material assistance to detainees; monitoring medical facilities assisting local Red Crescent sections and visiting casualties; evaluating the general situation in the villages and camps in the occupied territories and providing material assistance to families whose houses had been ordered destroyed. The delegation also contacted the authorities with a view to solving certain problems arising from violations of international humanitarian law. On 19 May it forwarded a summary report to the Ministry of Defense, in which it reminded the Israeli authorities of their obligations and their responsibility regarding the behaviour of soldiers in charge of riot control.

On 31 May the delegates carried out a general census in the seven military detention centres now holding the persons arrested in connection with the events; they registered 5,139 detainees there, including 1,939 administrative detainees. The delegation moreover continued its traditional protection activities (such as visiting prisons and police stations).

To strengthen its operational infrastructure, the delegation set up Tracing Agency facilities and opened a new office in Nablus on 7 June, covering the northern part of the West Bank.

Lebanon

The fighting between Amal and the Hezbollah in the southern suburbs of Beirut, the clashes between Palestinian factions and the Israeli operations against the bases of the Islamic resistance in southern Lebanon had serious consequences for the civilian population and caused the ICRC to step up its activities, which it carried out under sometimes difficult conditions: the delegates went out into the field on scores of occasions, made countless visits to hospitals and distributed medical supplies and food to people trapped between the lines of fighting; they also provided assistance to many inhabitants of the suburbs who had been forced to flee to the south.

Emergency relief operations were organized in addition to the ICRC's customary assistance activities in the villages of southern Lebanon worn down by the interminable conflict.

The delegates also continued their protection activities in the country.

Iran/Iraq Conflict

The third series of visits made in 1988 to the Iranian prisoner-of-war camps in Iraq began on 28 May. Similar visits in Iran had not been resumed, so on 13 June the ICRC forwarded a *note verbale* to the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which it reminded the Iranian authorities of the problems in the application of the Third Geneva Convention encountered by the ICRC during its single series of visits in 1986-1987 to 15 camps and six hospitals holding Iraqi prisoners of war interned in Iran.

Assistance to displaced persons protected by the Fourth Convention formed the subject of a second urgent appeal launched by the ICRC on 9 May to National Societies and donor governments.

A dissemination seminar on the Third Geneva Convention was held in Baghdad from 16 to 24 June for commanders of prisoner-of-war camps, senior officers of the military police and military judges. This seminar, the first of its kind, was jointly organized by the ICRC delegation, the Iraqi Red Crescent and the Iraqi Government's Permanent Committee for War Victims.