

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES**(May-June 1989)***Africa****Senegal/Mauritania**

Following ethnic clashes in Mauritania and Senegal in April, the ICRC sent delegates to both countries.

Initially, with the situation still unclear, the delegates carried out complete surveys on both sides of the border to ascertain medical needs and endeavoured to repatriate the injured and sick from Senegal to Mauritania and vice versa. At the same time they worked together with the two National Societies to set up a tracing network to meet the needs of tens of thousands of people who had crossed from one country to the other, often at night and in great haste. In addition, delegates visited Mauritanian and Senegalese prisons to provide protection for foreigners detained there.

When the emergency was over, the ICRC launched programmes to provide material, medical and food assistance to the many refugees living in camps in both countries. In Senegal the ICRC gave first-aid courses to some 100 people.

Southern Sudan

During the period under review, the ICRC continued its race to keep one step ahead of the rain by distributing food relief in the conflict areas in southern Sudan, both those under government control and those controlled by the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). By the end of June, 13,000 tonnes of foodstuffs had been delivered; of this, 7,000 tonnes were distributed and the rest kept in reserve for the difficult period of the rainy season. In the areas controlled by the SPLA,

the food supplies were dispersed among many different field warehouses in order to prevent large concentrations of people and the resulting difficulties (poor hygiene, risk of epidemics, etc.). In addition, 400 tonnes of grain and 350,000 packets of other seed and 30,000 hoes were distributed. People living near the Nile received fishing tackle. Finally, the large-scale vaccination programme continued with 450,000 animals having been treated so far.

In the area of detention, on 21 June the ICRC visited an initial group of Sudanese prisoners in rebel hands. The visit took place in full accordance with ICRC customary procedure, and Red Cross messages were collected. The ICRC is continuing its efforts to gain access to people held by the Khartoum government, whether members of the SPLA or any other persons detained in connection with the conflict in southern Sudan.

Mozambique

In the period under review, the ICRC stepped up its assistance programme, extending it to the provinces of Nampula and Zambezia. On 26 May, an ICRC road convoy reached Nahamaca, near Memba (Nampula province), where the delegates had identified major needs. Ten tonnes of maize, beans, cooking oil, blankets, tents and medicines were distributed at once while a nurse worked to set up a feeding programme. By the end of June, a total of 151 tonnes of relief supplies had been distributed to some 14,000 people. On 22 May, an ICRC team was able to return to Ile (Zambezia province) for the first time in two years. Those living in the centres for displaced persons were found to be in an alarming nutritional state, and food distributions were immediately organized for some 3,500 people. In addition, a therapeutic feeding centre was opened and in early July took in about 100 severely undernourished children, preparing some 1,000 meals a day for them.

The ICRC also continued bringing food and non-food assistance to some 44,000 people in the provinces of Manica and Sofala.

As part of its protection mandate, in early May the ICRC began a second series of complete visits to the places of detention administered by the Ministry of Security. At the same time, partial visits were made to the prisons in Machava, Nampula, Quelimane and Tete to distribute aid to the detainees and complete work on hygiene projects. In addition, the ICRC continued its efforts to gain access to people detained by RENAMO.

Uganda

Under a bilateral agreement between Uganda and Sudan, about 5,000 civilians and military personnel who had taken refuge in Uganda returned to Sudan. Their repatriation brought to an end the temporary and limited assistance operation which the ICRC had undertaken in their behalf. In all, the ICRC provided almost 35 tonnes of food as well as blankets and medicines.

In addition to the food and medical assistance which began in mid-April in Gulu and in mid-March in Soroti, delegates visited several detention centres in Kampala and Jinja. There they saw several thousand prisoners whom the ICRC had already visited previously; some of these prisoners received ICRC aid.

Angola

The ICRC launched a large-scale seed distribution programme on the Planalto to enable residents once again to produce enough food for themselves. When it ended in late June, some 54,000 families had received 120 tonnes of seed (maize, beans, etc.) thanks to which fields near rivers had once again been cultivated. In addition, 30,000 blankets and 79 tonnes of clothing were distributed to almost 59,000 families. *Ad hoc* distributions of non-food relief are conducted whenever particular needs are observed by the delegates, such as in Cuemba (Bié province), where the ICRC was able to return after six months of absence.

In the medical sphere, since mid-June an ICRC team has been running a dispensary twice a week in N'Giva (Cunene province). On the other days, the team travels to nearby villages for consultations.

Benin

In April and May, two delegates and a doctor accompanied the regional delegate based in Togo on a series of visits to 16 detention centres in different areas of Benin. Some of the centres had not been visited by the ICRC on its previous series of visits in April 1988.

Burundi

A second series of visits to security detainees ended in early May. The visits were carried out by delegates, including a doctor, from the ICRC delegation in Zaire. The first series of visits was made in December 1988 and January 1989.

Latin America

Cuba

For the second consecutive year, from 12 to 29 May the ICRC conducted a second series of visits to security detainees. A team led by the ICRC regional delegate based in Costa Rica visited more than 250 people in about ten detention centres in various parts of the country and in a hospital in Havana. These visits took place in accordance with customary ICRC procedure.

Ecuador

At the invitation of the government, the ICRC visited security detainees in Ecuador between 6 and 20 June 1989. A delegate and a doctor saw 30 prisoners in two places of detention in Quito, the capital, and in two prisons in the city of Guayaquil, in the south of the country. This was the first time in 15 years that the ICRC could visit detainees in Ecuador.

Asia

Afghan conflict

In the period under review, the ICRC surgical hospitals in Pakistan and in Kabul continued to deal with large numbers of casualties. In Kabul itself, the ICRC surgical hospital for war wounded admitted a record number of patients in May, the victims of sporadic gunfire in the capital or of fighting in the neighbouring provinces. As post-operative cases began to be transferred to the hospital of the Afghan Red Crescent, admission to the ICRC hospital gradually rose to an average of 90 patients a day.

The continued fighting, especially around the cities of Jalalabad, Khost and Kandahar, meant a constant influx of war wounded to the Peshawar and Quetta surgical hospitals across the border in Pakistan. The Peshawar hospital even exceeded the record figure for April when, in May, it admitted 500 Afghan casualties. A fourth surgical team was sent to help out, and more than 1,100 operations were performed during the month. June also saw a similar number of operations.

Field missions were carried out from Peshawar and Kabul. A team of delegates from Pakistan visited Paktika and then went to Wardak where it met up with another team from Kabul at the end of May.

The delegates based in Afghanistan were actively involved in detention matters: after a second complete visit to the Dar-ul-Tadib centre for minors in Kabul at the beginning of May, a team of delegates visited the prisons in Herat (for the second time) and Farah (for the first time) in June. During the mission to Herat the ICRC medical co-ordinator also checked on the standard of care provided for the wounded with a view to the ICRC opening a sub-delegation in that city.

In addition to its regular activities, in May the ICRC delegation in Kabul began a series of lectures for the armed forces on international humanitarian law and the work of the ICRC. The first lecture on 13 May was attended by some 300 soldiers, at the military academy in Kabul.

Philippines

Following renewed hostilities between the Philippine army and the New People's Army (NPA), some 30,000 people were displaced to the west of the island of Negros. After jointly assessing the situation with the National Society, the delegation set up a sanitation programme to improve poor hygiene conditions and lessen the risk of epidemics in the various resettlement sites. The civilian authorities undertook to provide assistance to the displaced people. To cope with the most urgent requirements, on 20 May the ICRC, working in conjunction with the Philippine National Red Cross, nevertheless distributed half-rations of food to some 2,000 displaced families, i.e., more than 10,000 people. This was the largest aid programme ever carried out by the ICRC in the Philippines.

Conflict in Cambodia

The ICRC continued to remind the various parties that the civilian status of the camps along the border must be respected and that safer areas must be found for the displaced people. It again expressed concern about the plight of the civilian population under the control of Democratic Kampuchea; representations also continued to have these people transferred to sights accessible to international organizations. In May and June, 800 people fleeing the Khmer Rouge camps arrived at the Sok Sann camp along the southern border. ICRC delegates registered the new arrivals and interviewed them without witnesses; in co-operation with United Nations representatives, they succeeded in convincing the Thai authorities not to send them back.

Middle East

Israel and the occupied territories

As tension continued unabated in the territories occupied by Israel, the ICRC stepped up its activities, especially in the medical sphere (for example, ambulances were escorted by delegates), and continued its representations to the Israeli authorities, urging them to put a stop to practices which contravene the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. To that end, the President of the ICRC was in Israel from 21 to 23 June; the discussions he had with the government authorities centred mainly on humanitarian issues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (see "Missions by the President", p. 360).

On 30 June, the ICRC issued a press release protesting against the expulsion to Lebanon of eight residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These new expulsions bring to 56 the number of persons expelled from the occupied territories since the beginning of the *intifada*.

This measure is in breach of Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates that individual or mass forcible transfers from occupied territories are prohibited, regardless of their motives. Again recently, during the President's mission, the ICRC told the Israeli government that it disapproved of such measures.

Lebanon

At the beginning of May the ICRC launched an emergency aid programme for approximately 100,000 displaced families in southern Lebanon: having fled the capital leaving everything behind, these people soon found themselves in serious difficulties. At the end of May, a ship carrying food reached Sidon. Family parcels were made up on the spot for distribution to families in need. By the end of June some 85,000 families had benefited from this programme.

In response to a request from the French authorities, the ICRC repatriated wounded or sick Lebanese civilians who had been taken to France for treatment. Before arranging for their return to Lebanon via Damascus, with the co-operation of the Syrian Red Crescent and the Lebanese Red Cross, ICRC delegates, including a doctor and an interpreter, went to France to ensure that the patients were in a fit condition to travel and that they really wanted to return home.

Iran/Iraq

Almost one year after the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq came into force on 20 August 1988, the ICRC deplores the fact that, despite all the representations made to both parties, there has been no progress in resolving the issue of repatriating all Iranian and Iraqi prisoners of war.

On 23 May 49 wounded or sick prisoners of war were repatriated from Tehran to Baghdad under the auspices of the ICRC.

The Baghdad delegation continued to make regular visits to Iranian prisoners of war and civilian internees to whom its delegates had access.