

President of the Swiss Confederation visits ICRC

Mr. Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, President of the Swiss Confederation, visited the International Committee of the Red Cross on 21 August 1989.

He was received by Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, ICRC President, together with members of the Committee, senior staff of the institution, and Mr. Pär Stenbäck, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Swiss President was accompanied by Mrs. Delamuraz, for whom a tour of the Central Tracing Agency had been arranged.

In his welcoming address, Mr. Sommaruga drew attention, on the eve of the 125th anniversary of the original Geneva Convention, to the remarkable similarity of views between the Federal authorities and the ICRC. The Swiss Confederation, depositary State of the Geneva Conventions, had in several ways been instrumental in enabling the ICRC to discharge its mandate worldwide. The ICRC President stressed, however, that the principles of independence and neutrality were vital to the institution's humanitarian work. Indeed, Switzerland's longstanding tradition of neutrality had favoured the development of the ICRC's activities the world over. Here Mr. Sommaruga took the opportunity to thank the Swiss people and the country's authorities for their generous contribution to those activities.

In his reply, Mr. Delamuraz declared that it would be a proud and moving moment for him on 22 August 1989 to celebrate, in his capacity as President of the Confederation, 125 years of humanitarian commitment and in so doing demonstrate his regard for international humanitarian law. His visit to ICRC headquarters and to the International Museum of the Red Cross and Red Crescent had increased his admiration and gratitude for the battles fought daily by the ICRC in favour of humanity, history and peace. On behalf of his government, Mr. Delamuraz then paid eloquent tribute to the institution's record of noble and often unrecognized dedication and to the completely independent vocation of the ICRC.

The visit ended with the signing of the Visitors' Book.