

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

May-June 1984

Africa

Angola

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, director for Operational Activities, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, ICRC delegate general for Africa, visited Luanda on 6 June where he was received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Dos Santos. He had talks with the Minister and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Ministers for Health and for Planning, the Secretary of State for Social Affairs and the Vice-President of the "Angolan Red Cross". The talks dealt with the setting up of an emergency programme of assistance for displaced civilian people victims of the events.

During the first half of the year, the ICRC programme of assistance for displaced civilians in Angola was considerably reduced, owing to the insecurity which reigned in the areas where these people most needed help, and the difficulties encountered by the ICRC to obtain the authorities' permission to work according to its operational criteria.

At the end of June, the programme was about to be resumed on a large scale, as after the mission of the ICRC director for Operational Activities to Luanda, an agreement was reached with the Angolan authorities, whereby the latter accepted the emergency plan proposed by the ICRC to provide the food and medical aid necessary for the survival of tens of thousands of displaced persons in the provinces affected: Benguela, Bie, Cunene, Huambo, Huila and Moxico.

The ICRC immediately dispatched a team of five delegates to Angola to plan and prepare for the food-aid programme. They were followed by another team, composed of a doctor, a dietician and a hygienist, to make a detailed evaluation of the displaced persons' medical and nutritional situation.

The emergency programme will be developed in stages and will assist about 200,000 persons in need.

While waiting for the relief operations to begin, the ICRC delegates pursued their activities wherever possible. With the co-operation of the "Angolan Red Cross" they set up, in June, a milk distribution centre for children in a camp with 1,450 displaced persons in Equimina, 120 km south of Benguela, and distributed tents, blankets and mats. During the first six months of 1984, a total of 645 tonnes of relief supplies was given by the ICRC to about 75,500 persons.

Southern Africa

The ICRC organized the release and repatriation of 30 Angolan prisoners of war and one Cuban prisoner held by the South African authorities, and of one Namibian prisoner held in Angola. The operation took place on 22 and 23 May in N'Giva, in the southern part of Angola.

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Twenty Czechoslovaks, held in Angola by UNITA since 12 March 1983, were released on 22 June under the auspices of the ICRC. They were flown on board a specially chartered plane via Johannesburg to Kinshasa (Zaire), where they were handed over to a representative of the Czechoslovak government, before being repatriated to Prague. The Czechoslovak authorities paid tribute on this occasion to the ICRC for the role it had played towards the successful outcome of this affair.

Republic of South Africa

Since the beginning of the year, ICRC delegates paid six visits to the Cuban prisoner captured by the South African forces in southern Angola. This prisoner was finally released on 22 May in N'Giva under the auspices of the ICRC as mentioned above.

Moreover, the ICRC delegates in Pretoria visited 3 security detainees in Venda, according to the normal ICRC procedure.

As part of the assistance programme for the families of detainees in need, the ICRC distributed, during the first half of the year, 2,955 food parcels of a value of approximately 185,000 Swiss francs. In view of the importance for prisoners of visits by family members and the long distances involving high transport costs, the ICRC also covered the travel expenses incurred by the visits of 591 persons to detained relatives: this aid amounted to a total of 157,000 Swiss francs.

Namibia/South West Africa

Throughout the first half of the year, the ICRC delegates continued to visit the 30 Angolan prisoners of war held in the Mariental camp, before organizing their repatriation on 22 May, as mentioned above. On two occasions, the delegates also visited, in the same camp, 131 persons detained under Proclamation "AG 9" (detention without trial), as well as 7 convicted prisoners and 3 security detainees at the Windhoek prison.

With regard to aid to detainees and to their families in need—a programme which works according to the system in force in South Africa—the assistance provided by the ICRC during the first six months of 1984 came to 42,850 Swiss francs.

Uganda

Relief action in favour of the large numbers of displaced persons in the districts of Mpigi, Mubende and Lowero, was considerably reduced and then suspended because of the restrictions imposed by the authorities. Conducted by the ICRC, in co-operation with the Uganda Red Cross and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the action was resumed at the end of May, though on a limited scale, after a mission to Kampala carried out by the ICRC delegate-general for Africa. The number of beneficiaries of the relief action continued increasing during the first four months of the year, reaching 121,000 persons in April. Later this fell, totalling 54,000 persons at the end of June. In all, 4,518 tonnes of food, 55 tonnes of soap, 17 tonnes of clothes and nearly 22,000 blankets were distributed during the first half of 1984.

Red Cross medical teams (of which one was especially assigned to giving vaccinations and the other to dealing with problems of hygiene) visited about 25 camps, giving more than 70,000 consultations. They organized the evacuation of 200 patients to hospitals and administered nearly 14,000 vaccinations, 7,700 of which were for measles.

The visits to places of detention under the authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which began in February (93 prisons and police stations) continued normally. These visits, which were made in keeping with ICRC criteria, were carried out by two or three teams each consisting of two delegates and one doctor. During the first half of the year, the delegates had access to 86 places of detention, and saw 10,558 detainees, of whom 2,083 came within the purview of the ICRC. The relief distributed during these visits (blankets, mats, soap, toilet articles and recreation material) amounted to 53,500 Swiss francs.

During the first half of the year, the ICRC Tracing Agency office in Kampala received 2,164 enquiries concerning persons presumed to be detained, and registered 2,401 persons in various places of detention visited by the delegates. In addition it exchanged 5,812 family messages.

Ethiopia

Owing to the increasingly dramatic situation of the displaced civilian population, victim of both the drought and the disturbances mainly affecting the north of Ethiopia, the ICRC considerably stepped up, in May and June, the relief activities which are part of the joint ICRC-Ethiopian Red Cross relief operation. In order to get to the areas which had become inaccessible by road because of the danger, a large transport plane was chartered and, from 7 to 25 June, it made 31 flights, taking about 500 tonnes of emergency relief from Addis Ababa and Asmara to Mekele and Axum (Tigre), as well as to Lalibela (North Wollo). This relief included not only food, medicines and medical equipment, but also clothes, blankets and tents to protect the people (already suffering from hunger) from the severe climate in the mountainous areas. The plane also transported construction material to set up storage and distribution centres and to build shelters, and flew in two trucks and four cross-country vehicles for on-the-spot relief work.

Through May and June, the ICRC distributed 2,140 tonnes of relief (against 1,409 tonnes in March-April) in the provinces of Eritrea, Tigre, Gondar, Hararge, Bale/Sidamo and Wollo. During the first half of the year, the volume of distributions was about 4,350 tonnes and about 140,000 persons benefited from them.

Furthermore, the ICRC continued giving medical assistance by supplying medicaments, bandages and perfusion equipment to the military hospitals of Addis Ababa and Hararge, to the hospitals of Mekele and Bale and also to the Mekele nutritional centre, where about 900 undernourished children are being treated. A similar centre at Chiry Ballo (110 patients) is run by an ICRC nurse.

Somalia

The ICRC was unable to continue its visits, in May and June, to the Ethiopian prisoners of war and the Cuban prisoner of war detained in Somalia, as the authorities had refused to allow interviews without witness. However, the ICRC delegates were able to see the detainees at the Mogadishu central prison, at Afgoi and at Gezira, during medical visits. During these visits they also distributed family messages from Ethiopia and collected others addressed by the prisoners to their families.

Zaire

During the first half of 1984, the ICRC delegates at Kinshasa paid about ten visits for registration purposes to two places of detention, where they saw about 370 security detainees (some of whom were seen several times) to whom they gave relief supplies (food parcels, toilet articles, etc.).

Moreover, towards the end of June, the ICRC delegate-general for Africa carried out a mission to Zaire. He had talks with President Mobutu and the State Commissioner for Justice and high officials of the National Security Council, and discussed the ICRC protection activities within the country.

Chad

In May and June, ICRC delegates continued visiting the prisoners of war in the detention centres of N'Djamena, Abeche, Biltine and Kalaït, as well as at the Adji Kossei military hospital. Relief supplies, particularly food, were handed over for the prisoners of war, especially in the capital, as part of an emergency assistance programme.

In the northern part of the country, on the other side of the front, the ICRC was forced to suspend its activities because of the difficulties encountered in obtaining access to all the prisoners of war detained in the B.E.T. (Borku, Ennedi, Tibesti) province. Its delegates based in Bardaï, chief town of Tibesti, consequently had to return to Geneva at the end of May.

From 25 to 29 May, the ICRC deputy delegate-general for Africa was in N'Djamena to discuss problems concerning protection with the authorities.

Western Sahara

The ICRC resumed its visits to victims of the conflict in the Western Sahara. Three delegates, one of whom was a doctor, visited, from 25 April to 1 May, 210 Moroccan prisoners of war detained by the Polisario Front, in five detention centres. Moreover, 10 Moroccan prisoners were released by the Front and handed over to the ICRC, which repatriated them to Rabat.

Furthermore, 99 Algerian Prisoners in Moroccan hands were visited on 20 and 21 June, in Morocco, by a ICRC delegate and a medical delegate. Following an incident which occurred on 15 June at the Algerian-

Moroccan border, the mortal remains of four Moroccan soldiers were handed over by Algeria to the ICRC, which organized their repatriation on 22 June.

Latin America

Missions from Geneva

As Vice-President of the ICRC, Dr. Athos Gallino, member of the Committee, accompanied by Mr. André Pasquier, delegate-general for Latin America and the Caribbean, carried out a mission which took him to Brazil and Peru from 11 to 22 June.

In *Brazil*, at Teresopolis, the ICRC representatives participated in two National Society meetings: one was the session of the Inter-American Regional Committee, and the other, the meeting of presidents and technical seminars of the National Societies of South America. In the speech he made on this occasion, Dr. Gallino pointed out the important role to be played, in the event of conflict, by the National Societies side by side with the ICRC, in keeping with the fundamental principles of the movement. Mr. Pasquier gave a talk on the activities of the ICRC in Latin America and emphasized the role of the National Societies in the dissemination of international humanitarian law.

In *Peru*, Dr. Gallino and Mr. Pasquier had talks with Dr. Max Arias Schreiber, Minister of Justice, Dr. Schwalb Lopez Aldana, First Vice-President (in the absence of President Belaunde), Dr. Luis Perco-vich Roca, Minister of the Interior, General Maury Lopez, Army Commander-in-Chief, General Guillermo Monzo Aronau, Chief of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces, as well as with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. During their mission they also met officials of the Peruvian Red Cross.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, Director for Operational Activities, and Mr. André Pasquier, ICRC delegate-general for Latin America and the Caribbean, visited *Cuba* from 13 to 18 May, where they had a long meeting with President Fidel Castro. They also had talks with Mr. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and of the Council of State, Mr. Viera Linares, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Julio Teja, Deputy Minister for Health and Vice-President of the National Red Cross Society, and Dr. Esmildo Gutierrez, Secretary General of the Cuban Red Cross.

Earlier (3-12 May) Mr. Pasquier had undertaken a mission in Central America, which took him to *Costa Rica*, *Nicaragua*, and *El Salvador*, and which enabled him, together with the delegates there, to make a general survey of current ICRC activities.

El Salvador

During the months of May and June, the food aid provided by the ICRC to displaced persons in the central and eastern parts of El Salvador increased considerably in comparison with the previous months. In May, nearly 302 tonnes of food were distributed to about 42,800 persons in the central part and more than 402 tonnes of food to 58,800 beneficiaries in the eastern part. For the month of June, these figures were respectively 244 tonnes for 34,400 persons and 247 tonnes for 51,000 beneficiaries. This relief, which was distributed with the co-operation of the Salvadorean Red Cross, was given to villages in the departments of Chalatenango, Cabanas, San Vicente, La Paz and San Salvador (central part), and the departments of San Miguel, Morazan, Usulután and La Unión. During the first half of the year, a total of 2,765 tonnes of relief supplies (corn, rice, beans, oil, milk, sugar and salt) were handed over to some 382,000 displaced persons.

Medical activities also increased a great deal in May and June. Both medical teams, the one based in San Salvador (four doctors, four nurses, one dentist, two hygienists, two assistant pharmacists and three first-aid workers) and the one operating from San Miguel (one doctor and three ICRC nurses, in addition to locally recruited staff composed of three doctors, two hygienists, three first-aid workers, one dentist and two assistant pharmacists) gave about 9,000 consultations in about thirty villages. These rounds also enabled them to evaluate the medical and sanitary needs, to check the nutritional state of children and to instruct the displaced population on matters of hygiene. During the first half of the year, the ICRC medical teams gave a total of 40,177 consultations and 4,937 dental check-ups. The value of the medicaments and medical equipment distributed in the course of this period to various hospitals and health centres came to 186,000 Swiss francs.

In the course of protection activities, the ICRC teams, composed of six delegates and one doctor, made 980 visits between 1 January and 30 June (210 in San Salvador and 770 in the provinces) in the barracks and security units under the authority of the Ministry of Defence and Public Security, as well as the prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. There they registered 597 new detainees, with whom they had interviews without witnesses.

Furthermore, the ICRC was requested to intervene as a neutral intermediary when, on 11 May, 35 persons, including women and children, were taken hostage during a hold-up by five armed guerillas in a supermarket in San Salvador. Guided solely by concern for the hostages, in accordance with ICRC policy for such interventions, and seeking to save their lives, the delegate-general for Latin America and the Caribbean, who was passing through El Salvador, acted as mediator and obtained the release of all the hostages. The five guerillas, who were granted political asylum at the Mexican embassy, were given safe conduct by the El Salvador authorities which enabled them to reach Mexico the following day.

In the course of the first six months of the year, the ICRC tracing agencies in San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana registered 1,330 enquiries concerning persons presumed to have disappeared or been detained.

To disseminate knowledge of the essential rules of humanitarian law and the principles of the Red Cross, the ICRC delegates, during the first half of the year, gave 55 conferences to about 11,500 members of the armed forces. Talks on the Red Cross were also given throughout El Salvador to the members of the National Red Cross Society.

Nicaragua

From 11 to 29 May, a team of six ICRC delegates, which included a doctor and two nurses, visited the prison of Tipitapa, where they saw 2,480 security detainees in accordance with normal ICRC procedure. Since the beginning of the year, this was the second visit made to this place of detention by the ICRC delegates, who also had access on two occasions to the « Zona Franca » prison (about 650 security detainees). The ICRC also visited, during the first half of 1984, the prisons of Juigalpa, Chinandega, Esteli and Matagalpa, with 193 detainees in all. Nearly 104 tonnes of relief supplies worth 208,600 Swiss francs, particularly food, medicaments and toilet articles, were handed over in the course of these visits.

About one thousand needy families of detainees continued receiving a monthly supply of basic foodstuffs. During the first six months of the year this aid represented 6,179 rations, totalling 104 tonnes and amounting to 147,330 Swiss francs.

The ICRC also stepped up its assistance programme in favour of displaced persons living in the area situated along the Atlantic coast. In co-operation with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, it chartered a boat which, twice a month, transports relief supplies from Puerto Cabezas to

Puerto Isabel (Zelaya province). From there two smaller vessels transport these supplies to the different villages of displaced persons along the Rio Prinzipolka delta and further inland on the banks of this river. About 800 families receive these supplies every month, consisting of rice, cereals, butteroil, sugar and salt.

The ICRC also continued giving aid to the displaced civilian victims of the events, particularly in the border areas near Honduras and Costa Rica. Relief material was handed over to the National Society for distribution to needy persons in the province of Jinotega and reserve supplies were stocked at local branches of the Nicaraguan Red Cross in case of need.

During the first half of 1984, a total of 5,000 displaced persons received monthly assistance from the ICRC and the National Red Cross.

Visits to places of detention

In May and June, the ICRC made several visits to places of detention in Latin America and the Caribbean. These visits are carried out by teams which often include an ICRC doctor. Interviews without witnesses take place with the detainees.

In *Chile*, a new series of visits to places of detention took place from 14 to 30 May. The ICRC delegates visited 176 detainees in 15 places of detention.

In *Columbia*, the series of visits which started on 24 March ended on 7 May. About a hundred security detainees were seen in prisons in the capital or in the country.

In *Haiti*, the ICRC regional delegate based in San José (Costa Rica) visited, from 20 to 26 June, three places of detention where he had access to 16 security detainees.

From 13 to 20 June, the ICRC delegates visited four places of detention in *Paraguay*, where they saw 31 detainees.

Asia

Missions by the delegate general

At the beginning of June, Mr. Jean de Courten, ICRC delegate general for Asia and Oceania, undertook a mission to *Thailand*, where he met representatives of the Thai authorities. He also had working sessions with senior members of the ICRC delegations in Bangkok,

Phnom Penh and Hanoi in order to take stock of ICRC activities and fix the aims for the second half of the year.

From 11 to 14 June, Mr. de Courten visited the *Philippines*, where he had talks with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his close collaborators, as well as with the Deputy Minister for Defence.

Conflict in Afghanistan

The first three Soviet soldiers, who had been captured in Afghanistan by opposition movements and transferred to Switzerland by the ICRC on 28 May 1982, have reached the end of their two-year period of internment agreed upon with the parties concerned. One of them, who confirmed his desire to be transferred to his country of origin, has returned to the USSR. The other two soldiers informed the Swiss authorities that they did not wish to return to their country. Their status will be determined by the Swiss authorities in accordance with the legislation in force.

The ICRC took this opportunity to make public its position regarding all the victims of the Afghan conflict in the following press release, published on 20 May in Geneva:

« Since 1979, the ICRC has made every effort to provide protection and assistance to the civilian and military victims of the armed conflict in Afghanistan, in accordance with the mandate conferred upon it in the Geneva Conventions and the statutes of the International Red Cross. On several occasions, it has reminded the parties whose armed forces are engaged in the conflict of their obligations under international humanitarian law. However, in spite of repeated offers of services to the Afghan government and representations to the government of the USSR, the ICRC has only on two occasions—during brief missions in 1980 and 1982—been authorized to act inside Afghanistan. Consequently, the ICRC has to date been able to carry out very few of the assistance and protection activities urgently needed by the numerous victims of the conflict on Afghan territory.

Due to the serious consequences of the situation in Afghanistan, the ICRC decided in 1980 to undertake protection and assistance activities in Pakistan. It opened two surgical hospitals for Afghan war wounded, the first in Peshawar, the second, in July 1983, in Quetta. In addition, being deeply concerned by the plight of persons captured by the Afghan opposition movements and by information to the effect that several such persons had been executed, the ICRC tried to find a way of protecting the lives of both Afghan and Soviet captured persons.

Negotiations carried out by the ICRC with, successively, the USSR, the Afghan opposition movement, Pakistan and Switzerland led to partial

success. The parties agreed to the transfer and internment in a neutral country of Soviet soldiers detained by the Afghan opposition movements, in application, by analogy, of the Third Geneva Convention, relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.

On the basis of this agreement, the ICRC has had access to some of the Soviet prisoners in the hands of the Afghan movements and has informed them, in the course of interviews without witness, of the possibility for transfer by the ICRC to Switzerland, where they would spend two years under the responsibility and watch of the Swiss government before returning to their country of origin.

The ICRC made this proposal to the Soviet prisoners on the basis of the principle worked out at the 1949 Diplomatic Conference and stipulated in the Geneva Conventions, i.e. that repatriation of a prisoner of war signifies the return to a normal situation and is in the best interests of the prisoner. The above-mentioned procedure therefore applies only to Soviet soldiers who consider themselves to be in a situation comparable to that of a prisoner of war in enemy hands. Consequently, the entire operation is based on respect for the principle according to which the ICRC never acts against the wishes of the person it is assisting.

To date, eleven Soviet soldiers have accepted the proposal. The first three were transferred to Switzerland on 28 May 1982. Eight others arrived in August and October 1982, January and October 1983, and February and April 1984. One of them escaped to the Federal Republic of Germany in July 1983

The first three Soviet soldiers reach the end of their period of internment on 27 May 1984. In conformity with the spirit of the provisions of international humanitarian law in this respect, the Swiss authorities, under whose responsibility the soldiers are, have taken the measures necessary to repatriate those internees still wishing to return to their country of origin.

The ICRC's main concern since the beginning of the conflict has been the unacceptable restriction of its humanitarian activities. In view of the situation, which has inflicted so much suffering on the Afghan population for over four years, the ICRC expects all the parties to the conflict to enable it by all means possible to protect and assist in all places all of the victims of that conflict, and thereby fully respect international humanitarian law and its principles. »

Pakistan

The ICRC delegation in Pakistan continued to provide medical assistance for the Afghan victims of combats within their country.

In May and June, the ICRC hospital in Peshawar recorded 273 admissions of war casualties; the two surgical teams (one from the Finnish Red Cross and the other from the ICRC) performed 336 operations and gave 1,418 consultations to out-patients. At Quetta, 156 war casualties were admitted to the hospital and 261 operations were performed by the Italian Red Cross surgical team; 762 consultations were given to out-patients. Owing to the growing number of admissions in comparison with the preceding months, the hospital capacity was increased from 40 to 60 beds and an additional surgeon, also provided by the Italian Red Cross, was sent to Quetta.

The mobile first-aid teams of the Pakistan Red Crescent, based in Miram Shah, Parachinar, Wana, Badini and Chaman, also continued to tend the wounded crossing the border, and to evacuate those who needed surgical treatment to the hospitals of Peshawar and Quetta.

In May and June, 18 new patients were admitted to the paraplegics centre in Peshawar.

Kampuchea

The ICRC pursued its programme of assistance for several hospitals in Phnom Penh ("17 April", "The Revolution", "7 January", "2 December"), and for the paediatric clinic and the malaria treatment centre. This aid mainly consisted in supplying equipment to distill water and make perfusions. In addition, the ICRC regularly supplied medical equipment to the mobile blood-bank teams of the local Red Cross, as well as to the medical teams of the French, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies, working respectively at Kandal and Prey Veng, Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Cham.

During the first half of the year, 26 flights organized by the ICRC between Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh, transported 13.7 tonnes of relief supplies and 214 passengers to Kampuchea, either for the ICRC itself or for other humanitarian organizations. Besides this, in June, a flight from Singapore to Phnom Penh transported 2.3 tonnes of medicaments and medical equipment (value: 35,000 Swiss francs) for the ICRC pharmacy at Phnom Penh.

Thailand

The two ICRC hospitals in Khao-I-Dang and in Kab Cherng, on the Khmer-Thai border, continued their activities normally. At the end of June, the medical teams working in these hospitals consisted of 4 surgeons, 4 anaesthetists and 13 nurses sent by nine National Red Cross Societies (Belgium, Finland, France, Iceland, Japan, Norway,

Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom). The medical co-ordinator and the administrator of the hospital in Khao-I-Dang were sent by the New Zealand and the Canadian Red Cross Societies respectively. Moreover, 120 Thai and Khmer medical staff assisted these teams in their work.

Since the beginning of the year, the Khao-I-Dang hospital has registered 1,168 admissions (including 446 war casualties) and the one at Kab Cherng 650 (including 84 war casualties).

The two Thai Red Cross medical teams in charge of one of the out-patients sections at the hospital in Khao-I-Dang have given about 33,500 consultations. The ICRC also gives financial support, amounting to about 240,000 Swiss francs per month, to the Thai Red Cross assistance programmes for Thai civilians and Khmer refugees.

During the first half of the year, the medical relief provided by the ICRC to the Khao-I-Dang and Kab Cherng hospitals, to the infirmary at the Aranyaprathet prison and to the dispensaries of border camps, totalled more than 500,000 Swiss francs. Furthermore, during the same period, the ICRC distributed relief supplies in the camps (mainly para-medical equipment) worth approximately 157,000 Swiss francs.

The work of the ICRC tracing agency in Thailand remained considerable throughout the first six months of the year, except for a short period in April, when its activities were reduced after the dispersal of refugees from the camps owing to a fresh outbreak of fighting on the border. Enquiries were made in an attempt to trace about 4,000 persons and approximately 10,000 letters were exchanged between refugees and their families, settled either in another camp or abroad. Moreover, the ICRC arranged for 1,363 persons to be transferred, issued 21 travel documents and registered 1,292 new refugees.

Middle East

Missions from Geneva

Mr. Jean Hoeffliger, ICRC delegate general for the Middle East and North Africa, was in Teheran from 19 to 29 May, when the ICRC resumed its visits to Iraqi prisoners of war detained in Iran.

From 10 to 14 June Mr. Hoeffliger was in Damascus, where he had talks with representatives of the Syrian authorities and senior members of the Palestinian movement "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/General Command". During his stay, the ICRC delegate

general had access to three Israeli prisoners captured in Lebanon in May, who filled in capture cards and family messages.

Repatriation of prisoners

After several months of negotiations through the intermediary of the ICRC, Syria and Israel began, on 28 June at Kuneitra, to release prisoners of war and civilian internees whom they handed over to the ICRC for repatriation. The mortal remains of soldiers who had fallen in Lebanon in 1982 were also repatriated on this occasion.

Israel handed over 291 Syrian prisoners of war captured in Lebanon in 1982 and the mortal remains of 72 soldiers to the ICRC. It also released 20 Syrian civilian internees, 7 of whom were accompanied to Damascus and 13 returned to their homes on the Golan heights.

For its part, Syria released 6 Israeli prisoners of war, 3 of whom had been captured in Lebanon in 1982 and 3 others in May 1984, and returned the mortal remains of 5 Israelis.

Lebanon

Following developments in the general situation, ICRC relief action in Lebanon considerably diminished during the months of May and June, as the most urgent needs of the civilian population affected by the events had been met. The relief distributed monthly amounted to about 200 tonnes for approximately 30,000 recipients. Fourteen convoys were also organized for isolated villages situated in the Chouf mountains and the Bekaa Valley. Three boats, chartered by the ICRC, transported a part of the necessary food and equipment from Cyprus to Lebanon. During the first half of the year, relief distributions (food, soap, blankets, kitchen utensils and family parcels) totalled 2,307 tonnes, and benefited about 125,000 persons.

ICRC nurses and doctors continued visiting the medical centres in the various parts of Lebanon. The amount of dressings and medical equipment distributed declined substantially, despite the outbursts of violence and sporadic shelling to which the civilian populations of Beirut and Tripoli were subjected. On 11 June, after the shelling of residential areas in the capital and the suburbs to the south, the ICRC gave the Lebanese Red Cross 800 units of blood, provided by the Finnish, Norwegian and Swiss Red Cross Societies, for distribution in its medical centres. On 27 June, after the bombardment of an island off Tripoli, the ICRC and voluntary first-aid workers of the Lebanese Red Cross evacuated by sea one casualty and seven bodies. The ICRC delegates also made numerous visits to hospitals and dispensaries in Tripoli in order to evaluate their

needs. The value of the medical kits, medicaments and surgical equipment distributed from 1 January to 30 June amounted to 2.1 million Swiss francs.

The ICRC also continued supporting the activities of the Lebanese Red Cross. During the first half of the year, aid provided to the National Society represented about 500,000 Swiss francs. It took the form of almost 5,000 units of blood and 425 units of plasma (donated by the National Societies of Finland, France, Italy, Norway and Switzerland), medical kits, 24 ambulances (donated by the National Societies of Denmark, Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany and Norway), wheel chairs (donated by the Spanish Red Cross), and medicaments bought in Lebanon for about 110,000 Swiss francs. The ICRC furthermore undertook to finance the costs of setting up a Lebanese Red Cross medico-social and first-aid centre in the southern suburb of Beirut. The installation and running costs of this centre for the first six months have been estimated at 91,000 Swiss francs.

ICRC prosthetists continued helping amputees and victims of the events, in the orthopaedic centres of Beit Chebab and Saida. Consultations are also given periodically in Baakline, Baalbek, Faloogha and Tyre, at Lebanese Red Cross premises, for persons who can be fitted with appliances immediately.

The 12 ICRC delegates in Saida and Tyre, including a doctor, continued making complete monthly visits to the prisoners held in Ansar, as well as weekly visits to register new prisoners. Relief was provided during these visits. At the end of June, the ICRC had registered 602 prisoners at Ansar.

In conformity with the mandate entrusted to it under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the ICRC pursued its efforts to extend its traditional activities of protection to the civilian population in southern Lebanon. It also continued its regular visits to the Palestinian camps around Saida and Tyre.

Through its Tracing Agency offices in Beirut, Joonieh, Tripoli, Baalbek, Ksara, Saida and Tyre, the ICRC received or transmitted more than 20,000 family messages in May and June. It also organized five repatriations. The relatively large number of messages exchanged through the Tracing Agency was due mainly to the increasing difficulties of communication between southern Lebanon and the rest of the country.

Conflict between Iran and Iraq

On 19 May, after a nine-month interruption, the ICRC resumed its visits to Iraqi prisoners of war in the *Islamic Republic of Iran*. By the

end of June, the ICRC delegates in Teheran had visited three camps, where they saw some 11,000 prisoners of war. About 500 new prisoners were registered and corresponding capture cards were transmitted to the power of origin.

In *Iraq*, regular visits to some 7,300 Iranian prisoners of war were continued.

Between 1 January and 30 June, nearly 720,000 family messages were exchanged through the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva, between Iraqi and Iranian prisoners and their respective families in the two countries. Furthermore, 5,789 enquiries concerning missing persons were handled.

To cope with the growing activities, the staff at the ICRC delegations in Baghdad and in Teheran was increased: 16 delegates are presently based in Iraq and 15 in Iran. They are assisted in their duties by 39 locally recruited employees, 36 in Iran and 3 in Iraq.

Europe

Missions from Geneva

Mr. Alexander Hay, President of the ICRC, accompanied by the regional delegate, visited *Czechoslovakia* from 31 May to 3 June, where he was received by the President of the Republic, Mr. Gustav Husak, and had working sessions with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Lucan, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Svoboda, as well as the President of the Czechoslovak Red Cross, Mr. Hatiar. Mr. Hay also attended the opening of the Ninth Congress of the National Red Cross and delivered a speech.

Mr. Maurice Aubert, ICRC Vice-President, went to *Belgium* and in Brussels, on 29 May, he met representatives of the Foreign Ministry and discussed a number of problems of mutual interest.

At the invitation of the Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the *USSR*, Mr. Aubert, accompanied by Mr. Peter Küng, ICRC delegate general for Europe and North America, was in the Soviet Union from 11 to 16 June, and visited Moscow and Leningrad. Mr. Aubert had talks with members of the Executive Committee of the Alliance, during which the main subject of discussion was the Red Cross and peace.

On the return journey, the delegate general stopped over at *Warsaw*, where he met the President of the Polish Red Cross to take stock of ICRC activities in Poland.

Spain

From 6 May to 2 June, three ICRC delegates—one of whom was a doctor — carried out a series of visits to places of detention in Spain. They went to 7 places of detention, where they saw 424 persons accused of or sentenced for “acts of terrorism”. The visits took place in accordance with the normal ICRC procedure.
