

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

July-August 1984

Africa

Angola

Following the agreement with the authorities in Luanda, the ICRC spent July and August establishing the logistic structure necessary to launch a relief operation for some 200,000 persons displaced as a result of the conflict in Angola.

The first phase was to constitute stocks of relief supplies and to obtain transport to take them to the distribution centres set up in a dozen places in the provinces of Huambo, Bie and Benguela. Simultaneously, the ICRC delegates continued their missions to assess the medical and food needs and to determine who should receive assistance. The staff was strengthened during this period by the arrival of 26 more delegates, ten of them doctors or other medical staff, on loan from the Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

In July, a large freight aircraft chartered by the ICRC flew 20 tonnes of medical supplies from Geneva to Luanda. On 9 August, a ship chartered through the good offices of the German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany unloaded 1,100 tonnes of relief supplies at Lobito, including 900 tonnes of food, 10 tonnes of clothing, trucks, and containers for use as storage. A second cargo vessel carrying about 2,242 tonnes of food, 15,000 blankets, 200 tents, and vehicles for various purposes, reached Lobito on 5 September. Between 10 and 31 August, the aircraft was used to transport 723 tonnes of relief (mainly food and medical supplies) from the ports of Lobito and Namibe (formerly Moçamedes) to the Planalto, for storage in Huambo and Kuito. Two other planes later took the supplies to the distribution points at Bailundo, Katchiungo, Mungo, Cuima, Ecuinha, Alto Ama, Bie, Cubal and Ganda. The first distributions began at the end of August: 52 tonnes of food were given to about 4,000 displaced persons in the province of Benguela.

It should be noted that the special feeding centre in Kuito, in Bie province, resumed its activities early in September. Building work has begun on another feeding centre at Mungo, in Huambo province.

Republic of South Africa

The annual series of visits by the ICRC to sentenced security detainees and persons in preventive detention began on 26 August and continued until 12 September. Six delegates, one of them a doctor, visited 4 places of detention housing 302 detainees.

Under its programme of assistance for needy ex-detainees and their families, the ICRC delegation distributed during July and August 752 food parcels to a value of almost 40,000 Swiss francs. The delegation also paid the travel costs for families visiting relatives in detention; this aid amounted in all to 46,000 Swiss francs.

Namibia/South-West Africa

On 23 August, ICRC delegates visited 76 security detainees in Mariental camp. The visit was carried out in accordance with the usual ICRC procedure.

The ICRC also continued its assistance to needy detainees and their families (food parcels, blankets, travel costs for detainees' families), representing approximately 15,000 Swiss francs for the months of July and August.

Uganda

Owing to the very dangerous conditions in the country, the ICRC's activities, carried out jointly with the Ugandan Red Cross and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, had to be discontinued from the end of July, except for a few emergency programmes undertaken in Kampala and its near neighbourhood. On 30 July, an incident occurred on the road from Kikyusu to Wobusana, in the Lowero district; shots were fired at a Red Cross convoy and three persons were wounded: an ICRC nurse, on loan from the Irish Red Cross, a doctor of the Ugandan Red Cross, and a liaison officer.

After this incident, which caused temporary discontinuance of delegates' movements in the area, the ICRC sent the deputy director of Operational Activities, Mr Philippe Dind, to Kampala. During his stay there, from 15 to 29 August, Mr Dind met Mr Paulo Muwanga, Vice-President of Uganda and Minister of Defence, and General Smith Opon Ajak, the Chief of Staff of the armed forces. In the course of his

talks with them, it was decided that Red Cross assistance activities would be resumed in the area north of Kampala known as the "triangle", bounded by the roads to Bombo and Hoima.

Despite the slowing-down of its activities, the ICRC, in July and August, distributed 435 tonnes of relief supplies, including 395 tonnes of food and 2,860 blankets. The two ICRC medical teams gave almost 15,000 consultations and vaccinated 1,700 persons; they also took 55 sick persons to hospitals.

Visits by the ICRC to places of detention (prisons and police stations) were also continued, in accordance with the list of priorities drawn up in agreement with the Ugandan authorities. The ICRC likewise continued to supply relief to the detainees.

The ICRC's tracing agency in Kampala received 88 requests to trace persons and transmitted 792 Red Cross messages between the detainees visited and their families.

Ethiopia

The efforts made to extend the relief operations undertaken as part of the joint activities of the ICRC and the Ethiopian Red Cross made it possible to give assistance during the month of August to a record number (about 230,000) of people suffering from the consequences of both the drought and the troubles prevalent in Ethiopia. The number of people assisted in this way in July was 149,000. Food distributed during the two-month period in the provinces of Eritrea, Gondar, Tigre, Bale, Hararge and Wollo amounted to 3,270 tonnes, as compared with 2,140 tonnes in May and June.

The number of persons in need has continued to increase, especially in the north of the country, where people have been pouring in to the distribution centres to register. The ICRC delegates have carried out regular evaluation missions to ascertain the needs and to discover whether there are more persons who may require assistance.

The ICRC medical team has made visits to Mekele, Axum and Adua, in Tigre province, and also in the province of Wollo. The chief problems encountered were malnutrition and its associated diseases. Two ICRC nurses have continued to work in the feeding centre at Mekele, where an average of 600 under-nourished children were treated each day. Moreover, medical supplies were distributed at Jijiga and Axum, for displaced persons, and were supplied to the military hospitals at Harar and Addis Ababa.

The artificial limb workshops installed by the ICRC at Asmara and Harar have continued their work under the direction of technicians sent

from Geneva. They produce about thirty artificial limbs monthly for war wounded.

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While visiting Geneva for the International Conference on Aid to Refugees in Africa, Mr Fikre Selassie Wogderess, General Secretary of the Provisional Military Administrative Council of Ethiopia (the "DERG"), Vice-President of the Council of Ministers and "patron" of the National Red Cross Society, accompanied by Mr Dawit Zawde' Chairman of the National Society, made a visit on July 10 to the ICRC headquarters, where he met the ICRC Vice-President, Mr Maurice Aubert, together with the Director of Operational Activities and the Delegate-General for Africa. They discussed the ICRC's activities in Ethiopia.

Somalia

The ICRC continued to provide food and other relief supplies for the prisoners of war held in Somalia (208 Ethiopians and 1 Cuban) and supplied beds and mattresses to the new dispensary established in Gezira camp.

During July and August, the tracing service of the ICRC delegation in Mogadishu initiated 24 searches for persons reported missing, and collected 309 Red Cross messages from prisoners of war to their families.

Sudan

Throughout the first half of 1984, ICRC delegates have kept up their activities for the refugees of various origins who are living on Sudanese territory in the areas near the borders.

During July and August, the ICRC delegation in Khartoum received 98 requests to seek missing persons, chiefly among the Ugandan refugees. It also transmitted 139 family messages and arranged for one family to be reunited.

As part of its programme of assistance to the victims of the conflict in the Tigre, the ICRC handed over to the REST ("Relief Society of Tigray") 86 tonnes of relief supplies, to the value of 123,650 Swiss francs, for distribution to the most vulnerable categories among the civilians (old people, mothers and children, orphans, handicapped persons, etc.). In addition, 12 tonnes of flour and one tonne of lentils were delivered to the "Sudanaid" organization for its programme of assistance to those suffering from malnutrition, while 13 tonnes of foodstuffs were assigned to the feeding programmes being carried on by the Swiss Red Cross.

The orthopaedic centre in Kassala fitted 25 war wounded with prostheses in July and August, and made 26 prostheses. Specialists from Geneva work in this centre, which was set up in January 1984 with assistance from the ICRC.

To disseminate knowledge of Red Cross principles and the essential rules of international humanitarian law, the ICRC organized a seminar in July in Khartoum for senior officers of the Sudanese army, at which two delegates from Geneva gave lectures to the forty participants.

Chad

The ICRC delegates made visits in July and August to places of detention in N'Djamena, in Abeche in the Logone region, and in the south and centre of the country, registering 30 new prisoners of war.

In the same period, the ICRC distributed 36 tonnes of food and medical supplies to detainees in the central prison of N'Djamena.

Zaire

The text published in the last issue of the Review (July-August 1984) under the heading "Zaire" and referring to visits to detainees was imprecise. Readers are asked to correct it as follows:

During the first half of 1984, the ICRC delegates in Kinshasa made repeated visits to 2 places of detention. They saw a total of 371 detainees; among them 6 persons, visited 13 times, were detained for reasons of security. Some relief supplies were given to the detainees and to 11 families of detainees. The delegation also transmitted 121 Red Cross messages between detainees and their families.

The remainder of the text is unchanged.

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In July and August, the ICRC delegates visited in the capital and in the provinces 15 places of detention holding a total of some 2,200 detainees, about 20 of whom came within the competence of the ICRC. Almost 3 tonnes of relief and medical supplies were distributed to detainees and their families, benefiting 1,896 people in all.

The Kinshasa delegation of the ICRC dealt, in the same period, with 44 requests for tracing missing persons and transmitted 30 family messages. In addition, a delegate visited about 70 families of detainees in order to give them news of their relatives in detention.

Knowledge of Red Cross principles and the essential rules of humanitarian law continued to be disseminated: a seminar organized jointly by

the Zaire Red Cross, the ICRC and the League, for regional leaders of the National Society, was held in Kinshasa from 5 to 11 August. Three lectures on Red Cross activities were also given in front of a large audience.

Tanzania

During the month of July, an ICRC delegate based in Nairobi spent three weeks in Tanzania, where he gave lectures on the Red Cross to audiences made up of members of the National Society, officers of the Tanzanian army and university and college students. The ICRC regional delegate for East Africa, also based in Nairobi, paid a visit later to Tanzania, where he had talks with the Tanzanian authorities on humanitarian matters.

Latin America

El Salvador

In July and August, the ICRC delegates in El Salvador carried out, in the capital and the provinces, 270 visits to places of detention administered by the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Defence. In the course of these visits they registered 255 new detainees, whom they interviewed without witnesses.

The ICRC Tracing Agency's offices in San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana dealt with a total of 348 searches for missing persons; they continued to receive an average of 750 people a month asking for news of missing relatives.

On 2 August, when an armed attack was made on a San Salvador bank and about 50 people were held hostage by four members of an opposition group, the ICRC acted as intermediary and all the hostages were freed the next day safe and sound.

Continuing its aid to civilians affected by the fighting, the ICRC, in collaboration with the Salvadoran Red Cross, distributed 1,503 tonnes of food to 101,000 persons in July, and the same quantity to 85,000 people in August.

Medical consultations were given to 8,777 patients in July, and 1,030 persons received dental inspections. The figures in August dropped to 4,828 and 651 respectively, as many of the medical visits planned in the departments of La Libertad, Chalatenango, Cabanas, Cuscatlan, La Paz and San Vicente had to be cancelled, since authorization had not been received. Medicines and medical supplies, to the value of 50,000 Swiss francs, were provided to various hospitals and rural clinics.

To disseminate knowledge of the essential rules of humanitarian law and the principles of the Red Cross, the ICRC delegates, assisted by their colleagues of the Salvadoran Red Cross, organized 25 lectures, attended by an estimated 3,800 members of the armed forces.

Nicaragua

Between 7 and 26 August, the ICRC delegates visited 2,416 security detainees in Tipitapa prison, in accordance with normal ICRC procedure. During July, 15.6 tonnes of food and 2.9 tonnes of assorted relief supplies — valued in all at 64,000 Swiss francs — were given to detainees in the Tipitapa and Zona Franca prisons, both in Managua.

Needy families of detainees continued to receive help from the ICRC. In July, 13.4 tonnes of food (value: 22,000 Swiss francs) were distributed to 1,850 families, while in August 18.5 tonnes of food (value: 32,000 Swiss francs) were given to 1,220 families.

In co-operation with the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the ICRC pursued its programme of assistance for displaced civilians, chiefly Miskito Indians living in areas along the Atlantic coast, many of them accessible only by water. In July, the boat chartered by the ICRC took 19.8 tonnes of food, which was distributed to 4,200 needy people. The aid provided in August (food, tents, blankets, kitchen utensils) totalled 33.5 tonnes, value 77,000 Swiss francs, and was distributed to 8,300 displaced persons. A second boat was chartered by the ICRC to take relief supplies from Puerto Cabezas to the region of the Perlas lagoon, in the south of Zelaya province. An initial distribution of 12 tonnes of food was made to 1,300 persons.

From 15 to 17 August, an ICRC medical delegate, accompanied by members of the Nicaraguan Red Cross, carried out an evaluation mission in the Bluefields region, on the Atlantic coast. Delegates also travelled to the provinces of Jinotega and Zelaya Norte to assess the needs of displaced people. They provided medicines and medical supplies to a hospital and a medical centre in Jinotega province.

The head of the ICRC's orthopaedic programmes visited Nicaragua from 6 to 10 August, in order to examine with the Health Ministry the possibility of co-operation with the Government's "Aldo Chavarria" orthopaedic centre.

Honduras

The ICRC delegate based in Tegucigalpa visited the south of Honduras from 23 to 28 July in order to distribute and collect Red Cross

messages exchanged between the Miskito Indians there and their families still in Nicaragua. He distributed 550 messages and collected 406.

Visits to places of detention

Between 9 July and 2 August, ICRC delegates carried out a fresh series of visits to places of detention in *Uruguay*. They visited the prisons of La Libertad, Punta de Rieles, Punta Carretas and the “Cárcel Policial de Montevideo”, and five military garrisons in Montevideo, Paso de los Toros, Trinidad and Salta. They had access to all persons detained for reasons of security, a total of 726.

In *Peru*, from 3 July to 29 August, the ICRC delegates had access to 14 places of detention administered by the Ministry of Justice, where they visited 713 security detainees, 98 of them women. In 6 places of detention administered by the Ministry of the Interior, they saw 99 detainees, of whom 13 were women.

Asia

Conflict in Afghanistan

Two Soviet soldiers, captured in Afghanistan by opposition movements and transferred to Switzerland by the ICRC after agreement with all the parties concerned, reached the end of their two-year period of internment and returned to their own country on 8 August. They were accompanied to Zurich airport by an ICRC delegate, after talking to him without witnesses.

At the end of August, five Soviet soldiers remained interned in Switzerland. They are visited regularly by ICRC delegates.

Pakistan

Continuing its aid to victims of the Afghanistan conflict, the ICRC surgical unit in Peshawar admitted 299 wounded Afghans in July and August; it carried out 316 operations and gave 1,743 consultations to ambulant patients. The hospital in Quetta admitted 113 war wounded, performed 312 surgical operations and gave 460 consultations to ambulant patients. The mobile medical teams of the Pakistan Red Crescent, based at Parashinar, Miram Shah, Wana, Badini and Chaman, gave treatment, during the same period, to 147 wounded persons, 117 of whom were transferred either to Peshawar or to Quetta.

The new centre for paraplegics in Peshawar, the official opening of which on 7 July was attended by the governor of the province and a number of other leading figures of Paskistan, admitted 33 patients in July and August. By the end of August, the centre housed 79 patients (58 Afghans and 21 Pakistanis).

Kampuchea

The ICRC delegates visited three hospitals in Phnom Penh and provided surgical and X-ray equipment and anaesthetics as needed.

They also visited the provincial hospitals at Kompong Cham and Kompong Chhnang (where medical teams provided by the Swiss and Swedish Red Cross Societies, respectively, are working) and the hospitals at Battambang and Kampot.

An assistance programme to provide blankets, kitchen utensils and mosquito nets to the orphanages at Kompong Cham and Kampot was begun in July. In addition to these two orphanages, the ICRC delegates visited those in Kompong Chhnang and Battambang in order to assess the needs there.

The ICRC also continued to give logistic support to the medical teams of the French, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross Societies; the two last-named have had an increased number of war wounded for treatment.

In July and August, almost 5 tonnes of relief supplies were dispatched by the weekly flights organized by the ICRC between Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh. During the same period, two cargo vessels from Singapore brought to Kampuchea relief supplies comprising 10 tonnes of building materials, medicines and medical supplies for the Swedish Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross teams and 10 tonnes of medicines for the ICRC.

Thailand

During July and August, work went on at its normal pace in the ICRC hospitals at Khao-I-Dang and Kab Cherng, where medical staff provided by the Red Cross Societies of Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Japan, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland continued to nurse the war wounded and to deal with emergency cases. In this period, the Khao-I-Dang hospital admitted 359 patients (74 of them war wounded) and the hospital in Kan Cherng had 191 admissions (among them 25 war wounded).

The hospital in Khao-I-Dang has been supplied with blood for transfusions every month by the Australian Red Cross (400 units) and the Japanese Red Cross (100 units).

Between 28 June and 29 August, the cost of relief supplies distributed by ICRC delegates in the camps on the Thai-Kampuchea frontier and supplied to the prison at Aranyaprathet was 100,000 Swiss francs. The relief consisted chiefly of paramedical supplies (hygienic articles and cleaning products), bedding, kitchen utensils and clothing.

The ICRC's tracing service in Bangkok dealt with 1,530 requests to trace missing persons; it also transferred 874 persons from one camp to another, reunited 11 families, and forwarded 3,296 letters between refugees and their relatives in other camps or other countries.

Philippines

A new series of visits to places of detention in the Philippines began on 9 July. Two teams, each comprising three delegates, one medical delegate and an interpreter, visited 179 detainees and prisoners in 17 places of detention, in Manila and in two provincial areas.

Between 22 July and 11 August, two delegates, one of them a doctor, carried out a mission to the island of Mindanao to evaluate the needs of displaced persons.

Viet Nam

On 16 August the ICRC transferred 169 persons to Taiwan, under the programme for repatriating foreigners with no consular representation in Viet Nam. Since 14 September 1976, when this programme began, the ICRC has repatriated 5,203 Taiwanese.

Bangladesh

From 5 to 9 August, an ICRC delegate based at the regional delegation in New Delhi carried out a mission to Bangladesh, during which he had talks with the leaders of the Bangladesh Red Cross and with representatives of the Ministries of the Interior, of Foreign Affairs, of Defence and for Rehabilitation, concerning humanitarian problems of mutual interest.

Papua-New Guinea

From 16 to 28 July, the ICRC regional delegate based in Djakarta was on mission in Papua-New Guinea, where he met leaders of the National Red Cross Society and several officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Justice and of Defence. The regional delegate also enquired about persons displaced from Irian Jaya, and met representatives of the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Papua-New Guinea.

Middle East

Mission by the President

From 9 to 13 August, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Alexandre Hay, accompanied by Mr. Jean Hoefliger, ICRC delegate general for the Middle East and North Africa, carried out a mission in Iraq, where he had talks with Mr. Tarek Aziz, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Kitani, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The discussions concerned the activities of the ICRC in Iraq in connection with the Iraq-Iran conflict.

Conflict between Iran and Iraq

In July and August, the ICRC delegates continued to visit the prisoner-of-war camps in Iraq and Iran. From the onset of hostilities, in 1980, to 31 August 1984, 45,442 Iraqi prisoners of war were registered in Iran and 8,208 Iranian prisoners of war registered in Iraq.

In *Iran*, the ICRC delegates visited three new POW camps, bringing to six the number of places of detention visited since the resumption of protection activities, in May 1984. In *Iraq*, regular visits were continued in seven POW camps.

The ICRC delegates also visited Iranian civilians in Iraq, in conformity with the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war.

During July and August, 279,862 Red Cross messages were exchanged between Iraqi and Iranian prisoners of war and their families, through the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva. The ICRC delegates also initiated searches for 2,915 missing persons in Iraq and Iran.

Lebanon

The ICRC relief operations in Lebanon, considerably reduced during May and June as a result of the changed circumstances, virtually came to a halt in July and August, with the exception of some emergency action arising out of the fighting that took place in Tripoli (especially towards the end of August) and the clashes occurring in Beirut. The ICRC delegates took advantage of this relative lull to reorganize stocks and to hand over to other humanitarian organizations working in the area ("Caritas-Liban", "Help Lebanon", local relief committees) the perishable foodstuffs, mattresses and clothing which they had been unable to distribute to needy displaced persons. The ICRC office in

Larnaca (Cyprus), which had organized the dispatch of relief supplies to Lebanon since September 1983, was temporarily closed following the reopening of Beirut harbour and airport.

Medical activities also declined throughout the country. The ICRC medical delegates and nursing staff continued, however, to visit the hospitals, dispensaries and emergency centres, distributing some 130 medical kits to the value of 52,000 Swiss francs. The ICRC also supplied the blood bank of the Lebanese Red Cross with 1,416 units of blood, 399 units of plasma and a transfusion kit, the gift of the Finnish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies.

As part of their protection activities, the ICRC delegates made a complete visit each month to the Ansar camp, and weekly visits for the purpose of registering new prisoners; at the end of August, the camp held 858 prisoners.

On 9 July the ICRC delegates, one of them a doctor, visited 3 Israeli prisoners in the hands of the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine/General Command" (PLF/GC). Two of them had been visited three times in 1983, but the third had not been seen since he disappeared in 1982. Another visit was made to these prisoners on 20 August.

Also on 9 July, the ICRC delegates visited Atlit prison, in Israel, where they saw 121 prisoners; 119 of them should have been released on 24 November 1983, when the Ansar camp was temporarily closed down. The visit was the first those prisoners had received since that date; two further visits were made, on 30 July and 20 August.

Finally, the ICRC delegates made daily visits to the Palestinian camps near Sidon and Tyre and did their best to provide protection for civilians in southern Lebanon, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Through its tracing offices in Beirut, Jounieh, Tripoli, Baalbek, Ksara, Sidon and Tyre, the ICRC, in July and August, received from or transmitted to places throughout Lebanon 24,740 family messages (20,000 in May and June); such messages allow persons separated from their families or held in detention to keep in regular touch with their relatives. The ICRC also dealt with 28 requests to trace missing persons, repatriated 8 people and reunited 2 families.