

- they reflected upon, and questioned, official ways of dealing with refugee matters.

Taken in aggregate, this experience appears to be highly relevant for them in their future careers.

Els Marie Andrée Sunderlöf,

Nursing Instructor

Ingrid Sandin,

Research and Development Instructor

The Red Cross School of Nursing

STATUTORY MEETINGS OF THE MOVEMENT

(Geneva, 16-24 October 1990)

The Gulf crisis and its humanitarian implications dominated the work of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and that of the Executive Council of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which met respectively in Geneva on 22 October and on 23 and 24 October 1990.

● **Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent**

When it met on 22 October under the chairmanship of Dr. Ahmed Abu-Goura, the Commission issued the following press release:

“The Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, trustee of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, at its meeting in Geneva on October 22nd, 1990, expressed its deep concern about the consequences, in humanitarian terms, of the recent events in Kuwait, the massive deployment of military forces in the Gulf area and the possibility of the Middle East being drawn into an armed conflict that would cause innumerable victims among combatants and the civilian population. The Commission deplored the current difficulties encountered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in fulfilling its humanitarian mandate, which have left countless numbers of people without protection, and that disputes about the legal classifications of conflicts too often hinder the implementation of international humanitarian law.”

Therefore, in conformity with Resolution I of the Twenty-fifth International Conference of the Red Cross (Geneva, 1986), the Commission solemnly appeals to the Parties involved to respect all their obligations under international humanitarian law so as to enable the ICRC to carry out its humanitarian activities.

The Standing Commission also appeals to all Parties concerned to do their utmost to find a peaceful solution to the present crisis, in accordance with public international law."

During this meeting, the Standing Commission was informed by Mr. Rezsó Sztuchlik, President of the Executive Committee of the Hungarian Red Cross and the Society's Secretary General, about the initial preparatory work for the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which will take place in Budapest from 29 November to 6 December 1991. It also examined draft agendas and programmes for the Conference.

● Executive Council of the League

The 26th session of the Executive Council took place on 23 and 24 October under the chairmanship of Mr. Mario Villarroel Lander, President of the League. The ICRC took part in this meeting as an observer, together with representatives of the Iraqi, Kuwait and Saudi Red Crescent Societies.

The Executive Council extensively discussed the Gulf crisis and its humanitarian implications before adopting the following decision:

THE SITUATION IN THE GULF

The Executive Council,

having heard the report of the Secretary General and the interventions of the National Societies of Kuwait and Iraq and of other National Societies, commends the action already taken,

noting with concern that international relief and protection operations have been obstructed, *urging* the League and the ICRC to use all their influence, in any way open to them, to ensure that all the components of the Movement are able to assume their respective roles at the earliest possible date to relieve the suffering of the victims,

having taken note of the urgency of the situation in the Gulf region and the immediate need to relieve human suffering,

recognizing and *supporting* the appeal of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society for the implementation of international humanitarian law in order to alleviate the human suffering in Kuwait,

noting the understanding reached between the League and ICRC with regard to the request from the Iraqi Red Crescent for a donation of medications for vulnerable groups amongst the civilian population,

requests the League President and Secretary General and appeals to the ICRC to agree to any additional interim measures to be taken forthwith by either or both of the two institutions to provide assistance to those in need,

appeals to all National Societies, especially those in the region, to collaborate with the League, the ICRC and each other to facilitate the humanitarian objectives of the Movement,

further *encourages* the League President and Secretary General to take any necessary measures to respond to the needs of the victims in this matter in accordance with the Fundamental Principles, the Statutes of the Movement and the Agreement between the ICRC and the League of October 1989.

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The Executive Council also approved the "Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Development Co-operation" and the rules for the operation of the Development Fund, the establishment of which was agreed by the General Assembly at its meeting in October 1989. This Fund has a capital base of Sw. fr. 1 million to aid certain National Societies in their efforts to become more operational and more efficient.

Amongst the other major topics discussed during the meeting was the question of the League's possible status as observer at the UN, the transition programme for the South African Red Cross, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and "Women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development".

The Council took note of reports on the work of the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace (including the "World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War"), an interim report on the Seville World Fair (1992) and accounts of the activities of the four constitutional Commissions (Youth, Disaster Relief, Development, and Health and Community Services) which met beforehand on 18 and 19 October.