

Family relief programmes

In Natal, the ICRC's activity centred around a joint ICRC-South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) programme which supplied food and non-food items such as kitchen sets, jerrycans and blankets on a one-off, case-by-case basis to displaced people and to families who had lost their breadwinner. In 1990, as violence spread to other areas of the country, the ICRC began similar programmes with Red Cross regional branches in the Reef area near Johannesburg and in Transkei, where many families of migrant workers killed in the strife near Johannesburg were left in need.

Programmes for Mozambican refugees

Refugees from war-torn Mozambique continued to enter South Africa by the thousands through the homelands of Gazankulu and Kangwane. Although they were not considered refugees by the South African authorities, the ICRC counted these people and provided soap, blankets and kitchen sets to them through three relief committees in the homelands. This assistance was provided to refugees for a period of three months after arrival. The delegation also made representations to the authorities on several occasions regarding attacks or alleged mistreatment of some Mozambican refugees, and to ensure that they were not subject to arbitrary arrest and expulsion.

Relief programmes for displaced people

Throughout 1990 the ICRC assisted people displaced because of violence, including fighting between supporters of the ANC and Inkatha. It provided one-off help consisting of blankets, food, cooking utensils and first-aid kits to people fleeing violence-stricken areas.

The delegation distributed about 33 tonnes of assistance, including food

packages, 4,772 blankets, 674 kitchen sets and other goods, to families and displaced people affected by the violence in Transvaal. Other groups, including Natal families and displaced people, families of victims of the violence in Transkei and Mozambican refugees, received over 40 tonnes of assistance in similar programmes.

Cooperation with the National Society

The ICRC worked with the National Society in implementing the family assistance programmes and in providing assistance to displaced people in Natal, in Southern Transvaal and in Transkei. The ICRC and the Southern Transvaal regional branch of the National Society set up a joint programme for first-aid training in black townships in November; by the end of the year, over 400 people had taken part in the course. In addition, the ICRC encouraged the National Society to develop similar activities. It also provided financial backing for the Transkei Red Cross, which was largely dependent on outside financing.

ANGOLA

The fighting in Angola's 15-year-old internal conflict worsened in 1990, making it a particularly bleak year for the civilian population. Among the most affected people were those on the Planalto, or central highland, and in the south-east, where droughts and irregular rainfall disturbed food production for the third consecutive year.

In June, the ICRC submitted to the parties to the conflict a memorandum in which it proposed various means of extending its work throughout Angola.

In mid-year, the two sides agreed to permit the ICRC to transport goods and per-

sonnel for humanitarian reasons between areas controlled by UNITA¹ and those held by the government, and from other countries into Angola. This also represented a logistic milestone, as it was the first time in many years that roads could be used to reach the Planalto. The institution sent a number of convoys and small plane-loads of relief and medical goods from Namibia to Cunene and Cuando Cubango, from the coast to Huambo (on the Planalto) and from the Planalto to Likwa, south-east Angola, in October and November.

In December, ICRC field operations throughout the country were temporarily stopped at the request of the parties to the conflict. At the end of the year, the ICRC was engaged in talks with them with a view to resuming activities.

Activities for prisoners and detainees

The Luanda delegation continued to hold talks with the authorities aimed at gaining access to various categories of prisoners as defined in the ICRC's June 1989 offer of services, i.e., people held for security reasons or for reasons connected with the conflict. In 1990 access to these prisoners was still not granted.

Tracing Agency

The ICRC Tracing Agency in Luanda resolved tracing requests involving 704 people and assisted 392 people in family reunifications in 1990. These family reunifications concerned only people who had to be transferred from one government-held area to another; none were between UNITA and government zones. It also distributed 1,183 Red Cross messages, nearly all between people in Angola and Angolans living in Namibia.

¹ National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

Medical activities

Throughout 1990, ICRC medical programmes provided assistance to people both on the central highlands and in the south-east. ICRC medical staff on the Planalto and in Cunene province gave or supervised consultations in local clinics in 1990, and the delegation evacuated more than 2,500 wounded or sick people from isolated villages for treatment in district hospitals. Delegates also organized the vaccination of women and children against six childhood diseases as part of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

On the Planalto, the ICRC maintained two orthopaedic centres, in Bomba-Alta and Kuito, producing 1,575 prostheses, fitting 859 patients with prostheses and making nearly 1,700 pairs of crutches. In addition, these centres carried out over 1,800 major repairs to prostheses during the year. ICRC orthopaedic staff also travelled to other areas of the country to help care for those who had lost the use of limbs due to the conflict. An ICRC sanitation engineer worked on the Planalto year-round, sinking new wells and ensuring the cleanliness of water sources in villages where the ICRC operates. Sanitation work done by the delegation helped thousands of people to have a more reliable source of water in 1990.

Assistance for the civilian population

To fight the severe malnutrition noted in many parts of the Planalto, the ICRC concentrated its relief efforts in the first part of the year (until the April harvest) on emergency food distributions in this region. The situation had been made worse by over-use of the limited land available for cultivation: much of the area was off limits to farmers owing to land mines and lack of security.

With the arrival of the main April harvest, the delegation slowed the pace of general food distributions while continuing other activities, such as agricultural programmes (including in the south-east), medical assistance and tracing activities.

Many of the 25 or 30 communities in the area covered by the ICRC on the Planalto were hit by famine in early 1990, with as much as 30 per cent of the population suffering serious malnutrition in some places. The delegation therefore brought over 3,300 tonnes of food to the Planalto in early 1990, reaching nearly 130,000 people per month. The ICRC also opened five feeding centres in one of the hardest-hit towns, Ganda, reaching up to 1,900 people per day and helping hundreds of seriously malnourished children to avoid starvation.

The amount of food distributed was reduced from a monthly average of over 1,000 tonnes in the period from January to April to about 90 tonnes per month in mid-year, after the main harvest in April.

It later climbed to 681 tonnes in November, before the ICRC was forced to cancel food distributions in December when operations were stopped.

Between May and August 72,000 families on the Planalto received seed enabling them to plant *nacas* fields; these were fields irrigated by streams and rivers, which could be used for food production even during the dry season. Later in the year (September-November), the delegation distributed seed to about 200,000 people on the Planalto for fields dependent on rainfall, or *lavras* fields. The harvest from this crop represented the main source of food on the Planalto.

Just before the middle of the year, the delegation distributed blankets and other non-food items to 117,000 people on the

Planalto in preparation for the cold season.

Toward the end of the year, as the cycle of food shortages started once again on the Planalto, the ICRC resumed general food distributions there. It also initiated a programme in Cuando Cubango. From September to November, over 1,195 tonnes of food were distributed to 120,000 people. At the beginning of December, the ICRC was forced to stop general food distributions on the Planalto at the very peak of the lean season because it did not have the necessary authorizations from the parties to the conflict.

Dissemination and cooperation with the National Society

The Angolan Ministry of Defence and the ICRC organized a seminar for about 40 army officers on the law of war in early April.

Dissemination programmes for the general public made use of publications and radio spots.

The ICRC, together with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, assisted in running the Macolocolo mother and infant primary health care centre in Huambo, which opened in January. In addition, an ICRC tracing delegate worked closely with the National Society, especially in the provinces, to improve the Angola Red Cross tracing services, with mixed results. The ICRC also provided assistance for the ARC's blood donation programme and furnished relief supplies to the National Society.

Logistics

The opening of cross-line and cross-border operations in October enabled the ICRC to use road transport for the first time in seven years between Lobito and the Planalto, and to transport goods and

personnel from Namibia into the south and the south-east. Before that, virtually the only way to carry goods to the Planalto and between *municípios* there was by air.

Even while using road transport late in the year, it was still imperative for the ICRC to keep a minimum number of aircraft for use on the Planalto and to maintain communication with the south-east. The parties to the conflict authorized the ICRC to use roads only in certain places and their authorization was granted only temporarily, subject to extremely detailed prior notification; therefore, to keep up its ability to reach conflict victims in the most isolated areas, the ICRC continued to use aircraft.

South-east Angola

In January, ICRC delegates saw, for tracing purposes, 235 prisoners held by UNITA and in October carried out a complete visit to 206 prisoners. Early in the year, the ICRC was able for the first time to exchange Red Cross messages between people in UNITA zones and government-held areas. Also for the first time, Red Cross messages were exchanged between government soldiers held by UNITA and members of their families.

In Cuando Cubango province, the ICRC delegation included a medical team stationed at Luangundu hospital. A general practitioner, a midwife and a nurse were there year-round, and an ICRC surgeon was sent to reinforce the team when the caseload was particularly high. The ICRC also provided medication and technical support at other hospitals and clinics in the area.

In April, May and June the ICRC supplied seed for 26,000 people who fled battles in the Mavinga area, and clothing and blankets for about 4,000 displaced peo-

ple from the same region. Seed, tools and non-food items were also supplied to people near the Zambian and Namibian borders.

MOZAMBIQUE

The ICRC continued activities in a variety of fields in Mozambique in 1990. The delegation extended the scope of its visits to prisons, helped set up a specialized course for local orthopaedists, and opened a sub-delegation in Xai-Xai and an office in Chimoi. In addition to the local work of the Maputo delegation and the ICRC's four sub-delegations, delegates assessed the situation in government-controlled areas of Tete, Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Inhambane provinces, where the ICRC had no permanent presence. However, many of the ICRC's relief and medical activities in the field, and especially those in areas under the control of the opposition and in contested regions, were suspended or reduced for months at a time because of security constraints or owing to lack of authorization from RENAMO¹. Despite these constraints, the ICRC continued year-round to provide relief and medical assistance to conflict victims in the field.

Beginning in mid-November 1989, the ICRC was forced to stop using surface transport because of security considerations. In January 1990, after RENAMO reaffirmed that it would respect ICRC personnel, vehicles and aircraft, the delegation resumed the use of roads and waterways and opened the sub-delegation in Xai-Xai, thus extending the ICRC's operational capacity in Gaza province.

Delegates surveyed the situation in RENAMO-held areas in Nampula and Zambezia provinces and reported large-

¹ Mozambican National Resistance Movement.