

In addition, the ICRC made representations to the authorities to ensure the protection of people arrested as illegal immigrants in the Caprivi Strip.

The ICRC distributed about 62,600 Swiss francs worth of relief goods to people in detention and to families of ex-prisoners. Prisoners' families received 1,244 food vouchers.

The ICRC Tracing Office in Namibia resolved cases involving 640 people and exchanged 1,771 Red Cross messages, mainly for refugees from Angola.

### **Angolan refugees**

Angolan refugees in the north, children in a state hospital in Oshakati, patients at Rundu State Hospital and various other needy groups received about three ton-

nes of assistance, including food and blankets, from the delegation.

### **Dissemination**

Dissemination activities intensified toward the end of the year, when the delegation began holding sessions for military personnel in Oshakati and at the Namibia Defence Forces Military School and the Osona Military Base in Windhoek.

### **Cooperation with the Namibian Red Cross**

The ICRC and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worked together to develop the Namibian Red Cross as it took steps to become a recognized National Society and member of the League.

## ***Central and West Africa***

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### **LIBERIA**

The conflict that broke out in Nimba county, in the north, late in December 1989 slowly spread to the capital during the first half of 1990, leading a growing number of refugees to flee the country. In January, the ICRC set up a delegation in Monrovia to provide assistance within Liberia. The institution also quickly established tracing offices for Liberian refugees in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, and later set up another tracing office in Sierra Leone. The ICRC's regional delegations also provided assistance to the National Societies of the neighbouring countries as they dealt with the influx of refugees.

In the middle of the year, Monrovia, besieged by rebel forces, was the scene of acute human suffering, as the forces

of two rebel groups — the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor and the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) headed by Prince Johnson — became bogged down in their attempts to take the capital from the Armed Forces of Liberia, led by President Doe.

The ICRC set up protection centres for vulnerable groups in the capital, one of which was brutally attacked in late July (see details below). The security situation in the capital deteriorated to the point where it was no longer possible for the ICRC delegation to work. On 30 July, the ICRC issued an appeal to all the parties to the conflict to respect the physical and mental integrity of the population and expressed its concern at the serious exactions committed against civilians in Monrovia. The ICRC pulled out of Monrovia in early August.

After the closing of the Monrovia delegation, the ICRC continued work begun in early April in areas of Liberia held by the NPFL. At the end of October, having been assured that conditions in the capital permitted resumption of activities, the ICRC reopened the Monrovia delegation.

### **Protection of the civilian population: ICRC efforts run up against a terrible human tragedy**

The fighting had already taken on an ethnic dimension since the beginning of the year, pitting Mano and Gio people against the late President's tribe, the Krahns. With the deadlocked military situation and the worsening tension around the capital in the middle of the year, many people were subjected to attacks for ethnic reasons in Monrovia in May, June and July. They and others congregated in about 20 accommodation centres in various parts of Monrovia, including churches, schools and embassies.

Prompted by the population's need for protection, in June the ICRC and the Liberian Red Cross Society extended the protection of the Red Cross emblem to five centres for vulnerable groups in the capital. For three weeks, these centres provided shelter, medical attention and food for up to 6,000 people in serious danger because of their ethnic origin.

On 30 July, in the early morning, a group of armed men broke into the Lutheran Church, one of the centres under the protection of the Red Cross, and went on a killing spree which left hundreds dead. The ICRC was forced soon thereafter to leave Monrovia. Given the absolute lack of respect in the city for international humanitarian law and for the Red Cross emblem, the institution's work had become impossible. Despite its appeal of 30 July, the ICRC remained absent from Monrovia for three months.

### **Visits to people in detention**

Delegates continually requested access to people held in connection with the conflict in talks with all those participating in the fighting. In December, the ICRC gained access to 18 NPFL prisoners held by the Military Observer Group of the ECOWAS<sup>1</sup> (ECOMOG)<sup>2</sup> in Monrovia. Civilians interned by the NPFL during the war represented another major concern for the ICRC, and the institution was able to obtain the NPFL's permission to visit interned Liberians and foreign nationals at the end of December.

People in detention received about four tonnes of assistance from the ICRC in 1990, including three tonnes of food.

### **Tracing Agency**

Early in the year, the ICRC quickly established tracing offices and agencies in Monrovia and in various places where large numbers of Liberian refugees had fled (Nzerekore in Guinea, Man in Côte d'Ivoire, and later Freetown in Sierra Leone).

With the three-month closing of the Monrovia delegation, tracing activities were made practically impossible, as the ICRC was not present in the capital. The ICRC tracing service thus adapted to the lack of a delegation in Monrovia by sending copies of all tracing requests to all tracing offices involved in assisting Liberians in the region. At the end of the year, the ICRC tracing service was once again operational on both sides of the front, and the number of Red Cross messages distributed grew accordingly, as did the number of tracing requests resolved.

<sup>1</sup> Economic Community of West African States.

<sup>2</sup> Economic Community Monitoring Group.

In 1990, ICRC tracing agencies in Monrovia, Man and Freetown resolved 209 tracing requests and processed 5,027 Red Cross messages.

### **Medical activities**

The ICRC distributed medical supplies throughout 1990 to hospitals and first-aid posts in both Monrovia and in NPFL-held areas. The ICRC also handed over medical material to the ECOMOG medical service once it began working in Monrovia in September, and to the Liberian Red Cross clinic in Kakata.

Monrovia had serious sanitation problems, especially regarding the water supply for its estimated 300,000 inhabitants, near the end of the year. In November and December, the ICRC maintained a sanitation team to clean up the city, bury the dead and try to improve the supply of clean water in the Monrovia area.

The total value of medical material provided by the ICRC in Liberia in 1990 was 152,288 Swiss francs.

### **Relief**

Early in the year, the ICRC provided food and other relief goods to people displaced by the conflict in the north. As the front progressed south, assistance was given on both sides of the front line. After the temporary closing of the Monrovia delegation, the ICRC continued to provide relief goods to displaced people in rural Liberia. With the delegation's reopening at the end of October, the ICRC resumed relief distributions for vulnerable groups in the capital.

## **RWANDA**

In October, when the conflict broke out in northern Rwanda, an ICRC team

reached that country within a day of the first reports of incidents, and provided about ten tonnes of supplies (mainly food) to hospitals and displaced people through the Rwandan Red Cross. Delegates began a series of visits to people arrested in connection with the events on 13 October. By the end of the year, they had visited 5,341 prisoners in 27 places of detention (18 Ministry of Justice facilities, eight gendarmerie installations and one military camp). During these visits, delegates provided about three tonnes of food, cleaning equipment, jerrycans, clothing and educational material to the prisoners. The ICRC also processed 3,550 Red Cross messages in Rwanda in 1990.

Earlier in the year, the Kinshasa delegation had carried out a series of visits to Rwandan prisons (*see below, under Kinshasa regional delegation*).

## **CHAD**

In Chad, the ICRC delegation continued efforts to gain access to Libyan prisoners of war held by the Hissène Habré government, and also carried out orthopaedic and dissemination work.

### **Representations and activities for prisoners of war**

Throughout 1990, the ICRC continued to request access to all Libyan prisoners of war held by the Chadian government, as it had done for the previous two years. In January, the ICRC issued a memorandum to the States party to the Geneva Conventions asking them to ensure that the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention be respected in the case of these prisoners.

In the end, with the exception of 53 Libyan prisoners of war visited in March 1990, the ICRC was not allowed to visit