

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

about one thousand others captured by the Chadians in late 1986 and in 1987. The group of 53 prisoners was visited in preparation for their repatriation, which never took place under the Habré government. No other prisoners were seen until the change of government. This was a clear violation of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

After the fall of the Habré government in December, the Libyan prisoners, including the 53 seen in March, were released and later repatriated or transferred to other countries without having been interviewed by delegates.

In late December, ICRC delegates visited a group of 594 prisoners who had been transferred to Kamina, southern Zaire aboard aircraft chartered by the US government. Delegates also went to Libya and visited another group of former POWs who had been repatriated directly from Chad in the beginning of December.

The N'Djamena delegation also issued certificates of detention for people who were visited by ICRC delegates in the late 1970s and 1980s. In 1990, 138 such requests were received. The Tracing Agency also handled Red Cross messages from the 53 Libyan prisoners visited by delegates; one of the prisoners received a reply, which was sent through the postal system.

Medical activities

ICRC prosthetists/orthotists continued to work at the Kabalaya orthopaedic centre in N'Djamena, participating in the training of local staff and in the production of prostheses, orthoses and crutches. The centre produced 214 prostheses and 118 orthoses, fitting 101 and 71 patients, respectively. It also made 146 pairs of crutches and carried out 165 major repairs to prostheses.

Dissemination and cooperation with the National Society

In the first half of the year, the ICRC and the Red Cross of Chad held dozens of dissemination sessions reaching some 30,000 journalists, schoolchildren, students, civil servants and Red Cross staff throughout southern Chad. Beginning in July, the ICRC delegation progressively handed over all dissemination equipment, documentation and material to the National Society, which was due to assume full responsibility for this programme in January 1991.

In addition to the hand-over of dissemination material and equipment, the ICRC also helped the National Society to develop a shelter and integration centre for street children in N'Djamena.

East Africa

ETHIOPIA

Once again in 1990, northern Ethiopia was the scene of heavy fighting and much human suffering. The armed conflict continued and tension increased during the year. In February, the port of Massawa changed hands after a major battle,

leaving Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, dependent on air transport for communications with the rest of the country. Further south, major clashes were reported within 150 kilometres of the capital. Heavy fighting took place near Dessie (Wollo province) and Bahr Dar (a town in northern Gojjam province, near Lake Tana).