

reached with Iraqi authorities for such action by the end of 1990.

Beginning in October, the ICRC increased the number of its staff in the region, and on 27 December a Task Force was organized at ICRC headquarters to deal with the crisis. Delegates already present in the Middle East prepared for possible intervention and more than 50 delegates remained ready in Geneva for departure to the region on short notice. With the cooperation of various National Societies, equipment and material assistance was mobilized and stored in Europe. The ICRC prepared for the rapid construction of refugee camps which would each hold 30,000 persons and transit camps, each with a capacity of 5,000 in any area in the region. (See also *Jordan below*).

The Central Tracing Agency contacted the parties with armed forces in the region and their National Information Bureaux in order to facilitate the tracing of missing persons using technical procedures developed by the Central Tracing Agency.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

In the conflict between Israel and the Arab states, the ICRC considers that the conditions for the application of the Fourth Convention, which prohibits an occupying power from settling its civilians in the occupied territory, destroying the homes of the people living there or expelling them from it, are fulfilled in all of the occupied territories (the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Golan and East Jerusalem). The principles that the rights of persons who are in occupied territory are inviolable is expressed in Article 47 of the Fourth Convention.

The Israeli authorities consider that in view of the *sui generis* status of the occupied territories, the *de jure* applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to these areas is doubtful. Israel prefers to leave aside the legal question of the status of these areas and has decided, since 1967, to act *de facto* in accordance with the humanitarian provisions of that Convention.

The disturbances in the territories occupied by Israel which began in December 1987 had a serious impact on the civilian population there. Many homes were walled up or demolished by the army. A marked decline in economic activity in the occupied territories over the year was accentuated in the second half by the conflict in the Middle East. The inter-Palestinian killings of alleged collaborators remained a source of concern for the ICRC in 1990.

In the period 1987-1990, the yearly total of persons detained by the Israeli forces increased from 4,000 to more than 16,000. Through the sustained presence of its delegates in the field, the ICRC endeavoured to carry out its protection and assistance mandate in behalf of protected persons in the territories that have been occupied since 1967.

From December 1987 through 1990, the number of ICRC expatriate staff in the area tripled. In 1990 there were more than 40 ICRC delegates in Israel and the occupied territories.

Protection activities increased as the number of persons detained went up. Tracing services were extended to keep track of the arrests, transfers and release of detainees in more than 40 places of detention. Medical assistance increased for detainees and for civilians wounded in the clashes. Relief assistance to detainees and their families was also stepped up.

Activities for detainees

In 1990, the ICRC carried out regular visits to protected persons held in prisons and police stations, and to security and administrative detainees held in military detention centres and a prison hospital.

The Qeziot military detention centre, situated in the Negev desert on Israeli soil and thus, contrary to the provisions of the Fourth Convention, outside the occupied territories, remained a major source of concern for the ICRC. About half of those detained in military camps are held at Qeziot, where they still could not receive family visits at the end of the period covered by this report. After a series of partial visits, the first complete visit to this camp was conducted in September.

ICRC delegates obtained access to places within the military governorates used for temporary detention for the first time in the early part of the year. Regular visits were conducted in 1990 by Arabic-speaking delegates to prisoners captured on the high seas or in southern Lebanon and transferred to Israel. The ICRC saw more than 21,000 security and administrative detainees in 1990; of this number, 14,990 were seen for the first time. Bi-weekly visits were made to prisoners under interrogation.

An ICRC doctor accompanied the delegates on visits to monitor the detainees' health and to evaluate medical facilities at the detention centres. Assistance was provided to the places of detention regularly visited by the ICRC.

The ICRC continued negotiations to obtain access to all detainees under interrogation, in accordance with the terms of the agreement between the ICRC and the Israeli authorities. In southern Lebanon, the ICRC tried to obtain access to individuals detained within the so-called

“security zone”. The ICRC pursued its efforts to secure family visits for detainees. Monthly visits by bus were organized to places of detention for the families of detained persons.

Protection of the civilian population

Since the beginning of the civil disturbances in 1987, the ICRC maintained a regular presence in the territories occupied by Israel, particularly in camps and villages under curfew, so as to monitor and facilitate the implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention by the occupying power. On 9 October, after a sharp rise in the number of dead and wounded in the territories occupied by Israel, the ICRC urgently appealed to the Israeli authorities to put an end to the use of live ammunition against civilians. In December, the ICRC appealed again to the Israeli authorities to treat the civilian population in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The ICRC conducted on-the-spot investigations and reports were submitted to the Israeli authorities whenever there was evidence of a violation of international humanitarian law (expulsion of residents from the occupied territories, destruction or sealing of homes, settlements constructed within the occupied territories, absence of legal guarantees).

As a neutral intermediary, the ICRC acted whenever possible to ensure the protection of the civilian population by evacuating the wounded and guaranteeing the immunity of hospitals and dispensaries.

Tracing Agency

The ICRC carried out tracing activities connected with protection: registering detainees, checking lists received from the Israeli authorities (about 1,000 new ar-

rests per month), opening and updating files, locating detainees (which involves a monthly update by the Tracing Agency of about 1,000 transfers from prison to prison), and issuing detention certificates.

The Tracing Agency also facilitated the exchange of messages between people in the territories occupied by Israel and their relatives living abroad, particularly in Arab countries.

In 1990, 18,872 arrests were communicated to the ICRC by families, and 18,642 cases were confirmed by the authorities, as well as by ICRC registration. A total of 28,234 certificates of detention were issued to family members in 1990 by the ICRC.

The number of Red Cross messages handled by the ICRC grew from 10,604 in 1987 to 24,367 in 1988, 74,567 in 1989 and 78,144 in 1990.

Medical activities

ICRC medical staff made regular evaluations of hospitals and dispensaries in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. They distributed medicines and other stocks of medical supplies when necessary, evacuated the wounded from areas affected by the disturbances, monitored their treatment in hospital and provided support when hospitals were overburdened.

The ICRC promoted and supervised training courses given by the Magen David Adom Society on the evacuation of wounded persons for ambulance staff from Red Crescent Societies. The ICRC also encouraged the professional development of existing mobile medical teams in order to improve the care given to conflict victims and the sick and wounded under curfew conditions.

During the last quarter of the year, the Netherlands Red Cross Society and the

ICRC made a joint study of the needs in hospitals in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in order to provide temporary financial assistance for running costs.

Relief

In 1990, the ICRC provided assistance in the form of blankets and tents for temporary shelter to 400 families whose homes were demolished or walled up by the Israeli armed forces.

Dissemination

In spite of the many years of ICRC presence in the region, in 1990 there was still a great need for spreading information about the ICRC, why it was in Israel and the territories occupied by Israel, and how the organization worked.

In 1990 the ICRC set up, developed and maintained a systematic dissemination programme for the Israeli armed forces operating in the occupied territories.

A dissemination programme was also set up for the Palestinian population, including members of the local Red Crescent branches.

JORDAN

The work of the ICRC delegation in Jordan included activities related to the situation in Kuwait, Lebanon and the territories occupied by Israel, dissemination of information on the work of the Red Cross, and cooperation with National Societies.

The amount of tracing work carried out by the delegation increased continuously following the *intifada* in the territories occupied by Israel. Thousands of detention certificates were issued, and the ICRC organized transportation of sick people