

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Middle East****ICRC proposes commissions of enquiry**

In view of the serious breaches of the Geneva Conventions of which the Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and of the Syrian Arab Republic on the one hand, and the Government of Israel on the other, have accused one another, the ICRC, in a note to the three Governments on 12 December, declared its willingness to lend its good offices with a view to setting up, under its own auspices or those of some other organization approved by the parties, an ad hoc procedure for the constitution of bipartite commissions of enquiry into the alleged violations. The commissions' terms of reference would be to investigate the materiality of facts of the alleged violations or interpret Convention provisions which were the subject of disagreement between the parties. The commissions' conclusions would be communicated to the Governments concerned.

Each commission would have three members: one appointed by each of the parties, the third by the ICRC or any other organization approved by the parties, chosen from prominent citizens of neutral States. If the ICRC were called upon to nominate the neutral member, it would choose a person outside the ICRC, in keeping with its practice and principles, for the ICRC itself does not conduct enquiries, this not being its task laid down in the Geneva Conventions.

Relief

Further relief supplies, provided by various National Societies and the ICRC itself, were sent between 5 and 15 December to the Arab Republic of Egypt (11 tons of medicaments, 4.5 tons of clothing and one ambulance) and the Syrian Arab Republic (4.2 tons

of medicaments, 4,370 blankets and 430 tents), while two Land Rovers were sent to Beirut and Tel Aviv, respectively.

By that time, the financial contributions which the ICRC had received from various governments amounted to 5.2 million Swiss francs. Further contributions had been promised.

North Africa

From 22 November to 8 December, the ICRC regional delegate for North Africa was on a mission which took him to *Mauritania* and *Morocco*. The talks which he had in those two countries centered on the participation of African States in the 1974 Diplomatic Conference and the dissemination of humanitarian principles, particularly among schoolchildren and in the army.

In *Mauritania* the ICRC regional delegate was granted an audience by H.E. Moktar Ould Daddah, Head of State. He also met the Ministers of the Interior and Defence, and conferred with Madame Moktar Ould Daddah, Honorary President of the Mauritanian Red Crescent, and with officers of that Society.

Although only recently recognized, the Mauritanian Red Crescent has already carried out considerable activities. The ICRC delegate's visit to its installations gave him an insight into the effective work carried out all over the country by the energetic members of that Society. A relief operation for the drought victims includes dispensaries, school canteens, the administration of medicaments, and the distribution of milk for children and high protein food to the stricken population.

The ICRC regional delegate then went to *Morocco*, where he was granted an audience by H.R.H. Princess Lalla Malika, President of the Moroccan Red Crescent. He also met members of the Society's Central Committee whose new headquarters and installations he visited in Rabat. At government level, he had talks chiefly on the subject of international humanitarian law with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Health and with the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence.

Tanzania

Between 5 and 15 November, an ICRC regional delegate for East Africa in Tanzania had numerous contacts with the authorities,

the National Red Cross Society, and with representatives of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the various liberation movements. In the course of the talks, such matters were discussed as the application of international humanitarian law in new forms of conflict, particularly the treatment and status of prisoners taken on either side and medical assistance for the liberation movements. The delegate also studied with the Tanzania Red Cross ways and means of setting up an office for the tracing of the many refugees with whom that Society is concerned.

Zambia

An ICRC regional delegate for East Africa was in Zambia from 27 November to 17 December, and there made a round of visits to places of detention. At Ndola he visited Kansendji Prison, the Remand Prison at Lusaka, and the Livingstone prison. As usual in those three prisons, he was given an opportunity to talk privately with the detainees.

During his stay, the regional delegate had various talks with government authorities and the Red Cross Society, chiefly about humanitarian, legal and practical problems arising out of new forms of conflict. Lastly, the delegate handed medical supplies to the ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union), COREMO (Mozambique Revolutionary Committee) and FROLIZI (Zimbabwe Liberation Front) liberation movements. He conferred with representatives of the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) and SWAPO (South West African People's Organization).

Chile

Visits to places of detention.—During the month of November, the ICRC delegates in Chile made 55 visits to 46 places of detention in different parts of the country. They saw more than 7,500 detainees there and, as usual, were able to talk to them without witnesses. During the visits, the delegates distributed medicaments, medical supplies, mattresses, blankets and other relief supplies to a value of more than 90,000 Swiss francs. Further visits to places of detention have started in southern and central Chile.

To rationalize the work, two sub-delegations were opened on 17 December, one at Temuco in the south and the other at Antofagasta in the north, each manned by two delegates.

Mission of an ICRC member.—From 29 November to 5 December, Mr. M. A. Naville, a member and former President of the ICRC, and Mr. S. Nessi, ICRC Delegate-General for Latin America, were in Chile. At Santiago, Mr. Naville met prominent government officials and Chilean Red Cross leaders. The talks centered mainly on ICRC activities and prospects of development, and on co-operation with the National Societies, particularly in providing relief for detainees and their families.

Laos

The ICRC delegate in Laos visited Chinaimo prison, Vientiane, on 18 October. He saw forty-seven detainees with whom he was, as usual, able to talk privately. At the end of the visit, the delegate handed out relief supplies consisting mainly of toilet articles.

Asian sub-continent

The repatriation of prisoners of war and the transfer of civilians to and from the three countries of the Asian sub-continent continues under the auspices of the ICRC and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. By 15 December, 23,626 prisoners of war and 11,045 civilian internees had been repatriated to Pakistan. From Bangladesh, 28,015 non-locals had left for Pakistan, whilst in the other direction 38,624 Bengali servicemen and their families and 2,568 Bengali civilians had left Pakistan for Bangladesh.

While these movements were going on, ICRC delegations in the three countries continued their customary visits to these various categories of persons and their relief distributions to the most needy.

In *India*, more than 23,600 Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian internees, in six groups of camps, were visited in November by ICRC delegates. In the same month, relief material (sports articles, glasses, books, etc.) was distributed. In addition, the ICRC remitted to individual Pakistani prisoners of war, on behalf of their Govern-

ment, small sums of money totalling 56,000 Swiss francs as a contribution to the festivities at the end of Ramadan. A gift of 12 tons of powdered milk from the Swiss Government to the ICRC was split equally between the Indian Red Cross Society and the Central Relief Committee of India, for distribution in the camps.

In *Pakistan*, the ICRC continued visiting Bengali detainees. From 24 November to 3 December, its delegates visited nine prisons in the North West Province and six in Sind Province; in all they saw 139 Bengali detainees.

Philippines

During the second half of November, the ICRC regional delegate for Asia and another delegate visited various places of detention in the Philippines.

They went to fourteen detention and rehabilitation centres in Manila and the islands of Mindanao and Cebu, where they saw altogether some 2,500 detainees. Everywhere they were able to talk to detainees of their choice without any witnesses.

Following these visits, the delegates handed the Philippine National Red Cross a sum of about 6,000 Swiss francs for the purchase of blankets, medicaments and other essential relief items which are to be distributed in the places of detention visited by the ICRC.
