

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

Africa

Financial appeals

The ICRC and the League of Red Cross Societies launched two appeals to the international community in mid-February, to raise the funds needed to continue and extend their activities in Africa on behalf of victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters.

These appeals are for 52.5 million Swiss francs for the ICRC and 41 million Swiss francs for the League. The money is required to finance the activities of these two institutions during the period from 1 January to 31 December 1981.

Delegate-general on mission

Mr. Jean-Marc Bornet, the ICRC's new delegate-general for Africa, was on mission from 9 to 26 February, during which he visited Zimbabwe, Zaire and Angola. In Salisbury Mr. Bornet presided over a meeting of heads of delegations in southern Africa. In Angola, where he stayed from 15 to 25 February, the delegate-general had talks with representatives of the Angolan authorities and leaders of the local "Red Cross", the main topic being the ICRC's assistance activities to help the displaced populations of the Planalto region, where the conflict persists.

Angola

After being suspended in December 1980, mainly because of the danger which prevented the delegates from moving freely on the scene of action, the ICRC's relief operations for the displaced populations on the Planalto were resumed on 8 January 1981, though at a slower tempo

than before. In the first two months of 1981 more than 100 tons of relief supplies (food, soap, clothing, cooking utensils), representing a total value of 300,000 Swiss francs, were distributed.

Encouraged by the results achieved at Katchiungo, the ICRC installed a new special feeding centre at Bailundo in mid-January, where the patients, mainly children between 6 months and 14 years old, are kept on a special diet under the supervision of a medical delegate.

A Tracing Agency office was opened at the end of January at the ICRC delegation in Luanda. Besides its customary tasks (tracing missing persons, reuniting families, repatriations, etc.), it will also be available to deal with cases of detained foreign nationals whose country has no diplomatic or consular representation in Angola.

Namibia/South West Africa

From 28 to 30 January two ICRC delegates again visited the Marienland camp (Namibia/South West Africa), where they saw 117 persons detained for security reasons. It was the ICRC's third visit to this place of detention, after the first one in June and the second one in September 1980.

Zaire

Mr. Jean-François Labarthe, ICRC delegate responsible for detention problems, went on mission to Kinshasa from 15 January to 3 February, during which he met several ministers and senior officials of the Zaire Government. In the course of his discussions he gave them an account of the ICRC's protective activities in Zaire, emphasizing the need to visit all places of detention controlled by the civilian and military security services and by the police.

In February the ICRC visited the military prison of N'Dolo, where it was given access to persons detained for reasons of security. Two visits were likewise made to the Makala prison, and to places of detention under the authority of the National Centre of Research and Investigation (CNRI).

In addition the Tracing Agency office, which has been incorporated in the Kinshasa delegation since November 1980, has been recording details of detainees visited, transmitting messages between persons in detention and their families, and dealing with requests for enquiries. In the first two months of this year it received 34 requests for enquiries and was able to respond satisfactorily to 13 of them.

Ethiopia

On 10 February the ICRC again visited the Somali prisoners of war held at Harar; 60 prisoners were seen on this occasion, 22 for the first time.

The rehabilitation centre for war disabled, organized by the ICRC at Debré Zeit, was the scene in January of the first graduation of Ethiopian orthopaedists and physiotherapists. After a year's training and studies under the supervision of the ICRC medical team working at the centre, about thirty young people successfully passed their examinations in the presence of the ICRC's Chief Medical Officer and two orthopaedic specialists, who had come from Geneva specially for this occasion. The certificates presented by the ICRC—which still have to be certified by the Ethiopian Ministry of Health—will entitle the new graduates to work as assistants, with the possibility of subsequently perfecting their knowledge.

The material assistance distributed by the ICRC between 1 January and 28 February 1981, through the intermediary of the Ethiopian Red Cross and the social welfare centres, consisted of 160.5 tons of relief supplies (foodstuffs, soap, blankets, bales of cloth, etc.) to the value of approximately 243,000 Swiss francs for people displaced in the provinces of Hararge, Bale, Sidamo, Gondar, Tigre and Eritrea.

Somalia

From 23 January to 22 February 1981 the ICRC made another mission to the Democratic Republic of Somalia, pursuant to the one made in December 1980.

The purpose of this mission, in which a medical delegate also took part, was to make a survey in the regions affected by military operations to determine the medical situation and need of assistance; to obtain the government's authorization to visit all prisoners of war interned on Somalian territory; and to negotiate the opening of a delegation in Mogadiscio.

Despite all the ICRC's endeavours, these objectives were not achieved, apart from a rapid medical evaluation along the Somali-Ethiopian frontier. In his sole official interview during his stay in Mogadiscio, with General Ismail, Commander-in-Chief of the Custodial Corps, the ICRC delegate stressed the Somali Government's responsibilities towards the prisoners of war interned in Somali territory and the ICRC's concern to discharge its protective duties in the country.

It should be mentioned that in August 1979 Mr. Richard Pestalozzi, Vice-President of the ICRC, obtained from Mr. Siyad Barre, President of the Somali Republic, agreement in principle to ICRC visits to prisoners of war.

Furthermore the ICRC submitted on 5 February to the Somali authorities, through the Permanent Mission of Somalia in Geneva, an official request to open an ICRC office in Mogadiscio.

Uganda

In January and February 1981 the ICRC was active in two different spheres in Uganda, providing protection and assistance for the civilian population afflicted by events in the West Nile province, and visiting places of detention.

In the West Nile province, where the ICRC has been active since November 1980, a sub-delegation was opened at the beginning of the year and reinforced in February by the arrival of a second delegate. Frequent tours by ICRC delegates to religious missions sheltering displaced persons (in the Moyo, Nebbi and West Madi districts) and visits to hospital centres in the Maracha, Arua, Vurra and Terego regions were accompanied or followed by the distribution of foodstuffs and medicaments. Twelve tons of relief supplies (food, blankets, soap, cooking utensils) were distributed in July and 16 dispensary kits, 6 pediatric kits and 9 dressing kits were handed to two hospitals and eight dispensaries.

In addition ICRC delegates visited and registered 38 detainees at Gulu prison, civilians and former members of the armed forces, arrested in November and December 1980.

An ICRC team consisting of four delegates and one nurse made a new series of prison visits at the end of January to eight places of detention which had already been visited in August 1980 and had received assistance over the past few months in the form of medicaments, foodstuffs and diverse relief supplies. The ICRC delegates also had 28 detainees transferred from Rwimi prison to that in Fort Portal so that they could be given adequate medical treatment.

As the authorities had proceeded to release an initial contingent of detainees, the ICRC helped to transfer a number of them from their prisons to the Wairaka centre, near Jinja, where they were taken in charge by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and the Salvation Army. Between 22 January and 7 February, 279 detainees were released in this way. The ICRC, which had frequently interceded for most of them for humanitarian reasons (age, physical disability, etc.), acceded to the government's

request to give them some material assistance in the form of mattresses, blankets and clothing.

During the first two months of the year the ICRC distributed 19 tons of relief supplies in the West Nile province and almost 9 tons in the prisons.

Sudan

The ICRC delegation in Khartoum continued its activities throughout 1980 to provide protection and assistance for the refugees of various nationalities on Sudanese territory.

The ICRC retained responsibility for the Kassala hospital, where a medical and surgical team made available by the Swiss Red Cross is working. The hospital mainly dispenses treatment to refugees from the Eritrean conflict. The medical team also visits two refugee camps and keeps the dispensaries there stocked with medicaments.

In July 1979 a rehabilitation centre for Eritrean paraplegics was organized by the ICRC at Port Sudan in conjunction with the Eritrean Relief Association. The ICRC provided assistance in the form of personnel, equipment and medicaments and arranged for the training of local staff in the care of paraplegics. The ICRC's participation ended on 28 February 1980. During this period of collaboration the centre treated 174 paralysed patients.

The ICRC opened a tracing office at its delegation in Khartoum in early 1980. In the course of the year the tracing office set up seven offices in provincial areas where refugees had gathered. These regional offices are run by local employees and voluntary workers.

The ICRC delegation in Khartoum also despatched relief supplies to Eritrea for the displaced civilian population there and prisoners detained by the liberation movements. These supplies consisted primarily of foodstuffs (contributing to the maintenance of 60,000 people), blankets, clothing, cooking utensils and medicaments, which were handed to Eritrean relief organizations for transport and distribution. The ICRC also delivered medicaments and medical equipment worth more than 700,000 Swiss francs to hospitals set up by the Eritrean movements.

A charitable organization in Tigre was also provided with medicaments for the victims of events in that part of Ethiopia.

Chad

After resuming its activities in Chad at the end of December 1980, as reported by *International Review*, the ICRC requested the head of its

Relief Division, Mr. Philippe Dind, to assess the needs of the civilian population afflicted by the fighting that broke out at N'Djamena at the end of the year. Following this mission the ICRC decided to continue its medical assistance and food aid for a limited period, until other charitable organizations could gradually take over as the situation returned to normal.

In early February the ICRC sent about 7 tons of medical equipment and medicaments worth 100,000 Swiss francs to be distributed among the various dispensaries and hospitals in and around N'Djamena. In addition 7.5 tons of foodstuffs were delivered for the nursing staff and patients in the hospitals. Since hygienic measures had become imperative (removal of bodies, municipal cleaning), the ICRC provided the refuse disposal employees with disinfectants and food aid.

Furthermore the ICRC and the Chad Minister of Health and Social Affairs have jointly undertaken a programme of food aid for needy families in the capital: 12 kg of rice and 1 litre of oil per family are being supplied by the ICRC and distributed by the Chad authorities.

In the course of the tracing office's work, 40 enquiries were started in the first two months of the year and 3 cases were satisfactorily concluded. In addition 16 family messages were passed on through the ICRC.

The ICRC delegation in Chad, which was set up provisionally at Kousseri on the Cameroon side of the Chari River, was reinstalled at N'Djamena on 1 March.

Latin America

Mission by the director of Operations

In the course of periodical visits to the various ICRC delegations throughout the world Mr. Jean-Pierre Hocké, director of the Operations Department, went on mission to El Salvador from 27 February to 5 March to see how needs were developing, and assess the material and financial resources required by the ICRC to continue its activities on behalf of all the civilian victims of events there.

Together with Mr. André Pasquier, ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, who had already been there since 23 February, Mr. Hocké had talks with members of the governing Junta and several ministers, as well as with leading representatives of the El Salvador Red Cross. These talks were mainly concerned with the ICRC's activities in El Salvador to

provide protection, food and medical assistance, and with the dissemination of knowledge of the principles of the Red Cross.

In order to dispel any misapprehensions as to its role and activities in El Salvador, the ICRC made a point of stressing that in accordance with its fundamental and immutable principles of neutrality and impartiality, it extends its aid to all victims, whoever they may be, who are protected by the Geneva Conventions, and that its action may in no case favour one side to the detriment of the other.

The ICRC furthermore pointed out that as a private institution acting with complete independence, it never engages in an enquiry at the request of a government or a governmental organization. Its rule in all its operations is to ensure, by the presence of its delegates, that its assistance does in fact reach the victims.

Mission by the delegate-general

Mr. André Pasquier, ICRC delegate-general for Latin America, completed a mission from 13 February to 4 March which took him to Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Argentina

Visits to places of detention in Argentina, interrupted in mid-December for the holiday period of the end of the year, started again on 15 January. ICRC delegates went to the Villa Devoto prison in Buenos Aires, where they saw 294 detainees. In February they visited Rawson prison and interviewed without witness 240 detainees. They likewise had access to five other places of detention, where they interviewed without witness 35 persons.

Chile

Between late January and mid February the ICRC regional delegate for the Southern Cone made a further series of visits to places of detention in Chile, where he had access to some 200 persons detained for political reasons.

Nicaragua

The problems relating to the ICRC's protective activities were one of the subjects discussed by the delegate-general for Latin America with members of the governing Junta and senior government officials during his stay in Managua from 13 to 21 February.

Besides the visits to prisons, which continued regularly in January and February, the ICRC was authorized to go to farming areas where detainees had been transferred to help with the coffee and cotton crops. ICRC delegates thus had access to two provincial camps, where they saw 333 and 588 detainees respectively and were able to talk to 80 of them.

In addition the ICRC approached the authorities to request an amnesty for about fifteen ailing and aged detainees. Their request was granted.

In all about ten places of detention, comprising some 2,500 people, were visited by ICRC delegates in the first two months of the year.

Relief supplies consisting of almost 29 tons of foodstuffs (rice, oats, milk powder, cheese) worth 32,200 dollars were distributed in the prisons in January, as part of the ICRC's food aid programme.

El Salvador

Following the armed clashes between guerrilla movements and government forces in El Salvador in January, ICRC delegates went to various parts of the country affected by fighting to assess the new needs resulting from the hostilities, and examine how relief measures for the displaced populations should be continued. They visited several localities in the Morazan, La Paz and Chalatenango departments, wherever safety permitted.

Despite the difficulty of moving around the country, because of the blocked roads and the general danger involved, foodstuffs for some 6,000 people were distributed in San Miguel and San Francisco Gotera. In the latter locality the ICRC delegate joined in with the El Salvador Red Cross to evacuate several hundred people, who had taken shelter at a health centre, to places of greater safety. In addition the ICRC, in conjunction with the National Society, gave foodstuffs and medical treatment to some 2,300 people in the village of Las Vueltas. However, ICRC activities were suspended in other localities in the Chalatenango province which were cut off from the outside world.

A medical delegate sent out from Geneva went on mission to El Salvador from 15 January to 9 February and visited the Morazan province. He observed there a grave need for medical assistance and selected five particularly hard-hit village with some 11,000 displaced persons for emergency medical aid. The ICRC set up a mobile medical team, composed of two doctors, one nurse and a driver, all locally recruited, which began from mid-February to visit these villages once a week to give consultations and dispense medicaments.

The ICRC delegates continued their protective activities, both in the capital and in the provinces. In January they went to 14 places of detention (security posts, military barracks, police stations, places under the authority of the Ministry of Justice), where they saw some 650 detainees, 192 of them for the first time.

The Tracing Agency at San Salvador registered nearly 200 new requests for enquiries, an increase of more than 50% compared with the number in previous months; 48 requests for enquiries into the whereabouts of missing persons were satisfactorily solved, and 21 cases were settled without ICRC intervention.

Asia

Delegate-general's mission

From 20 January to 12 February Mr. Jean de Courten, ICRC delegate-general for Asia and Oceania, went on a mission to Thailand, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Indonesia.

In Thailand, where he stayed from 20 to 25 January, the delegate-general met representatives of the General Staff, the National Security Council, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Thai Red Cross to whom he explained ICRC plans for its activities in Thailand and at the Kampuchean border in 1981.

While in Japan from 26 to 28 January, Mr. de Courten discussed ICRC activities in Asia and their financing with officials from the Japanese Red Cross and from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In the Republic of Korea where he stayed from 29 January to 2 February at the invitation of the National Red Cross Society, the delegate-general had talks with the Prime Minister, the Minister for National Unification, the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs and representatives from the Republic of Korea National Red Cross, for whom he outlined the activities of the ICRC.

During his visit to Indonesia from 3 to 12 February, Mr. de Courten took part in the Second Regional Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Jakarta. He also conferred with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the leaders of the Indonesian Red Cross on the follow-up to the ICRC assistance and protection action in Indonesia and in East Timor.

Assistance for the Kampuchean people

On 8 January a meeting convened in Geneva by UNICEF was attended by the organizations involved in the operation (ICRC, UNICEF, HCR, FAO, WFP) to discuss the funding of the relief action for the Khmer people in Thailand and Kampuchea. After reviewing the results of the meeting of donor countries held on 10 December 1980 in New York, the United Nations organizations decided to cut their budget for their activities in Thailand and Kampuchea in 1981 from 200 million to 180 million dollars; the ICRC likewise reduced its budget from 32 to 26 million dollars by limiting its intervention to essential and emergency activities.

On 5 February Mr. K. Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, addressed a message of thanks to the ICRC President, expressing his satisfaction that a new form of co-ordination would continue in 1981 with UNICEF both on the Thai border and in Kampuchea after the joint action of the two organizations had terminated.

Kampuchea

After the departure in mid-November 1980 of the medical team put at the disposal of the ICRC by the German Red Cross in the German Democratic Republic, a doctor and a nurse from the ICRC continued to provide medical assistance at the Kompong Thom hospital. At the end of January the hospital was running smoothly and the permanent presence of the ICRC staff was considered superfluous. The technical installations undertaken by the ICRC will be completed and the hospital will still be supplied with medicines and medical equipment.

From 23 to 27 January ICRC delegates toured the orphanages in the provinces of Kompong Chhnang, Pursat and Battambang to supervise the distribution of relief. In the five orphanages visited it appeared that the goods had been distributed in accordance with ICRC standards and according to plan. The aid distributed came from the ICRC and UNICEF and consisted of blankets, mosquito nets, sanitary and kitchen units, school equipment and games. This aid had been financed by a donation from a Swiss business concern and by the provision of 58,000 Swiss francs and 20 tonnes of biscuits by the Netherlands Red Cross.

The plane chartered by the ICRC carried 174 tonnes of aid worth 768,000 dollars in 26 flights from Bangkok to Phnomh Penh from 1 January to 25 February. In addition, 62 tonnes of aid were transported on behalf of FAO, UNICEF and HCR.

Thailand

The "NW9" camp where there are about 2,800 refugees of Vietnamese origin is the only camp on the Thai-Khmer border in which food from the ICRC is still distributed; from 1 January to 28 February the ICRC distributed in this camp 83 tonnes of food and other aid worth around 35,000 dollars.

On 10 February the surgery ward and the ICRC office at the Khao-I-Dang camp were destroyed by fire. The accident did not cause any victims; all patients were conveyed to other hospitals. Cleaning-up and rebuilding operations were undertaken immediately and on 17 February the hospital was already operating again. Generally speaking, the number of casualties hospitalized either at Khao-I-Dang or in camps near the border increased. From 110 a day in December 1980 it went up to 194 in January 1981; 80% of them were war wounded. Notwithstanding, co-operation with the voluntary relief agencies meant that the ICRC was able to reduce the number of its medical staff: on 1 March there were 27 ICRC doctors and nurses working on the border and in the Khao-I-Dang hospital, not including the technical and administrative staff. In January and February the cost of ICRC medical and paramedical assistance at the Thai-Khmer border totalled around 180,000 dollars.

For the first two months of the year the work of the Tracing Agency in Bangkok was very considerable. In February alone the ten delegates and the hundred or so locally recruited employees opened 618 enquiries, closed 189 files and treated 6,348 cases; 97,200 letters were sent or received and 363 persons were transferred from one camp to another.

From the beginning of the operation on behalf of the Kampuchean people, i.e. from December 1979, to the end of February 1981, the Bangkok Tracing Agency opened 45,000 enquiries concerning 12,300 Khmers and Vietnamese.

Malaysia

Refugees in South East Asia

On 10 and 11 January a meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur, attended by the ICRC, the League, the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the countries directly concerned with the problem of refugees of Vietnamese origin, and representatives of the Malay Government, the diplomatic corps, the HCR and ICM.

At this meeting the ICRC representative pointed out in his speech that, although the international community had known of the problem for more than two years, piracy was still rife. More than half of the

refugee boats were still attacked at sea owing to the niggardly protection measures in national and international waters. He appealed to the authorities to take protection measures and underlined that the Red Cross could play a role in the struggle against piracy by exerting moral pressure on those who were in a position to take the necessary measures.

On 1 February the special joint League-ICRC office for co-ordinating the relief action in favour of refugees of Vietnamese origin was closed; the two institutions will, however, continue to keep in contact and exchange information. For its part, the ICRC will keep a co-ordinator from the Central Tracing Agency in South East Asia to supervise the smooth running and development of the postal and tracing services (which will continue to be financed by the ICRC) of the National Societies of Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Macao, Hong Kong and China. All these national tracing offices are interlinked by the Central Tracing Agency in Geneva, which has registered more than 550,000 Vietnamese refugees.

Indonesia

Four ICRC delegates, including one doctor and one interpreter, began a new series of visits to persons arrested and sentenced in connection with the attempted coup d'état in 1965.

Philippines

An ICRC delegate was sent on a mission to Manila from 29 January to 6 February. In talks with government representatives he examined the situation of detainees after the presidential amnesty and the lifting of martial law as well as the possibility of a series of visits to these detainees.

On 5 March 1981 a visit was made to 18 detainees in the Military Security Unit at Fort Bonifacio in Manila.

Vietnam

Four flights were made on 22 and 29 January, on 12 and 26 February to repatriate Taiwanese nationals. Thanks to these operations organized by the ICRC 603 persons were repatriated from Vietnam to Formosa.

Pakistan

In January and February the ICRC medical action in favour of Afghan refugees in Pakistan increased. At the end of February three ICRC mobile medical teams were at work in ten camps for refugees in

Kurran and North Waziristan. In each of these camps permanent health centres were set up; more than 157,000 refugees benefit from the services of the ICRC medical teams supervising these centres. A fourth team has now begun work in the Adisaï camp thirty kilometres from Peshawar where a permanent health centre has also been set up.

Since October 1980 the ICRC has been supplying standard first aid parcels containing bandages and basic medicines to various organizations (including "Médecins sans frontière") assisting victims of the Afghan conflict.

Middle East

Delegate-general's missions

Mr. Jean Hoefliger, ICRC delegate-general for the Middle East, went on a mission to Iraq from 5 to 11 March and to Iran from 12 to 18 March. In each of these countries he had talks with the authorities concerning ICRC activities in favour of the victims of the conflict.

Iraqi-Iranian conflict

In January and February the ICRC continued its protection action.

In **Iraq** ICRC delegates carried out three visits to two camps holding about 2,000 prisoners of war, of whom 87 were examined by the medical delegate. In addition, a smallpox prevention campaign was undertaken on the recommendation of the ICRC and all the prisoners were vaccinated.

The Tracing Agency recorded 2,647 requests for investigations during the first two months of the year and settled 275 cases. In addition 8,252 family messages were received and 4,964 transmitted.

In **Iran**, apart from the continuation of visits to prisoners of war, the ICRC delegates carried out a survey from 14 to 20 February in the eastern province of Khorassan where there are thousands of displaced persons having fled the fighting in the west of the country. They visited several centres sheltering these people, who are taken care of by the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry co-ordinates activities undertaken for their benefit by the Iranian Red Crescent and by organizations depending on other ministries.

The ICRC delegates visited also a camp in the province of Khorassan where there were about 600 refugees from Afghanistan.

As far as visits to political prisoners are concerned, the ICRC delegates visited the Meshed prison in the east of Iran on 17 and 18 February, where they saw 269 persons detained by order of the Islamic courts.

Israel and occupied territories

In collaboration with the Amman and Beirut delegations, the ICRC delegation at Tel Aviv carried out two repatriation operations involving three persons: on 22 January a Lebanese detainee, who had been released by the Israeli authorities, returned home across the border post of Ros-hanikra (Ras Nakoura) and on 17 February two Jordanian civilian internees released by Israel returned to their country by the Allenby bridge.

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

From 25 February to 8 March Mr. Peter Küng, ICRC regional delegate for the Arabian peninsula, went on a mission to the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen where he met members of the government (including the Ministers of Defence and of Health, the latter also being the President of the local "Red Crescent") and several high ranking civil servants.

After having been given permission by the authorities to visit the detention centres, the ICRC delegate visited the Mansoura and Sabr prisons where he saw some 400 detainees. He interviewed four of them without witnesses.

The last mission carried out by an ICRC delegate in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen dates back to 1976 and the last prison visits to 1973.