

NEW PRINTING OF ICRC TRAVEL DOCUMENT

The ICRC has recently reprinted its travel document. The new documents differs very little from the one used up to the present; its form, text and general lay-out are substantially the same. On the other hand, certain characteristics of the paper on which it is printed and the addition of a coloured, underprinted lacelike network design should serve in the future to prevent any falsification or counterfeiting.

The new ICRC travel documents are numbered from 310.001 to 410.000.

The former travel documents on deposit with its delegations have been returned to the ICRC to be replaced by the new ones. The travel documents issued before this exchange, however, remain valid for the duration indicated on them at the time they were issued.

Description of new travel document

The new ICRC travel document is printed on a light, pliable but resistant paper, with a wavy vertical watermark. One side of the paper is smooth and the other slightly grainy.

The travel document measures 400 mm in length by 148 mm in width. It may be folded into quarters, 100 mm by 148 mm, thus constituting a booklet with a cover page and seven pages numbered from 1 to 7.

The printing is superimposed on a two-colour wavy lacelike network pattern which has tones ranging from light blue to a grayish pink. Included in this ground pattern are two irregularly disposed motifs: the round ICRC seal with a cross in the centre and the circular inscription, "Comité international de la Croix-Rouge — Genève" and, separately, in three horizontal lines, "Comité international / de la Croix-Rouge / Genève".

The *cover page*, in the upper portion, has in black capital letters, in three lines, the title, "Comité international de la Croix-Rouge Genève".

In the centre of the page is the round ICRC seal, as described above, but printed in red ink and embossed. These two elements are in French only.

The rest of the text, on the cover page and throughout the document, is printed in black ink in three languages, French, English and Spanish. The text provides all the indications required to draw up the travel document correctly, with essential data on the identity of the bearer. The number of the document, the duration of its validity and the place and date of its issuance are also provided for. A space is reserved for visas and for frontier control stamps.

The use of the ICRC travel document.

Although the *International Review* has frequently referred to the ICRC travel document,¹ it may be useful at the time of its reprinting to recall its purpose and the rules governing its issuance and use.

The travel document of the International Committee of the Red Cross was devised in February, 1945.² It is intended for displaced or stateless persons or refugees who, for lack of adequate identification, find it impossible to return to their country of origin or to the country of their former habitual residence or who cannot go to the country of their choice willing to receive them.

The travel document also enables a person to go to a temporary receiving country where he may take the necessary steps to seek a country willing to take him in either permanently or for a prolonged period.

It may be issued as well to persons who are not lawfully staying in the territory of a State where they have sought temporary refuge, in order to legalize their status in that country and prepare their departure for a country of asylum.

The ICRC travel document does not constitute an identity paper. However, if it bears the necessary visas or stamps, its bearer may use it to account for his presence in the territory of the country in which he is temporarily situated, up to the time of his departure, and subsequently in his country of destination, up to expiration of the visa entered in the document.

The ICRC travel document is issued in cases like those above, subject to the following conditions:

¹ See, for example, the *International Review of the Red Cross* of March, 1976, p. 136.

² See *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War*, Vol. 1, p. 669.

- (a) if the applicant has no valid passport or any other document enabling him to travel and if it is impossible for him to obtain or renew any such documents;
- (b) if the applicant has received an undertaking by the diplomatic or consular agents of the country where he wishes to go, and of the countries, if any, which he will cross in transit, that he will obtain the necessary visas;
- (c) if the applicant has been given an undertaking by the country whose territory he wishes to quit that he will be given either the authorization to leave or a safe-conduct.

Applications for ICRC travel documents may be made either direct to the ICRC or any of its delegations, or through a National Red Cross, Red Crescent or Red Lion and Sun Society, or through an international organization dealing with refugees, such as the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Unlike the travel documents issued by the States signatories to the conventions relating to the status of refugees or stateless persons¹ the ICRC travel document is not governed by any convention and is not considered as a national passport.

The status and nationality of holders of ICRC travel documents are not affected or determined by the issue of such documents.

The ICRC travel document is prepared on the basis of the applicant's statements and of any documents which he can produce, enabling visa authorities to verify that the applicant and the bearer are one and the same person.

The travel document contains a description of the bearer and a statement of the documentary evidence he may have furnished (e.g. an identity card or a driver's licence), or statements made by other persons, establishing his identity. Places are provided for the bearer's finger prints and photograph.

The ICRC travel document is free. It must be signed by an ICRC delegate or another properly authorized person. Its validity is limited to the period required to prepare for the voyage and to complete it. Except in very rare cases its validity may not be extended. The document is intended to permit a single voyage to the bearer's country of origin or of habitual residence or to a country of asylum, named on page 4 of the document. It is then a matter for the authorities in the country of des-

¹ See *International Review of the Red Cross*, March 1976, p. 136.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

mination to issue official identity papers. All travel documents whose validity has expired must be returned to the ICRC.

The ICRC created the travel document on the basis of its right of initiative, recognized by the Statutes of the International Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions. The establishment of the document, which meets a real need, has been well received by the many States which have been asked to affix upon it visas for entry or departure.

Thus, since 1945, more than 500,000 displaced or stateless persons or refugees, bearing ICRC travel documents, have been able to reach the countries of their choice, thanks to the good will of the governmental authorities concerned.

PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES WHICH PERSONS HAVE ENTERED OF LEFT WITH THE HELP OF THE ICRC TRAVEL DOCUMENT

AFRICA

Algeria
Angola
Egypt
Ethiopia
Ivory Coast
Kenya
Lesotho
Libya
Mozambique
Nigeria
Senegal
South Africa
(South-West Africa)
Swaziland
Uganda
Zambia

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
USA

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Guyana
Mexico
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Venezuela

ASIA-OCEANIA

Afghanistan
Australia
Bahrain
Bangladesh

Cambodia
Democratic People's Republic of
Korea
Hong Kong
India
Israel
Japan
Laos
Lebanon
Macao
Malaysia
New Zealand
Pakistan
Philippines
Republic of Korea
Syria
Thailand
Taiwan
United Arab Emirates

EUROPE

Austria
Belgium
Czechoslovakia
Denmark
Finland
France
German Democratic Republic
Germany, Federal Republic of
Greece
Hungary
Italy
Malta
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
Romania
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
USSR