

*EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES***Africa****Southern Africa**

Plan of action to the end of 1977.—To deal with the evolving situation in southern Africa, the ICRC has drawn up a plan of action for the last half of 1977, to enable it to co-ordinate and intensify its activities. The plan was approved by the Committee on 9 June.

The budget for the plan amounts to 7,350,000 Swiss francs and covers humanitarian activities in the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia/South-West Africa, the Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Zambia.

The plan was drafted on the basis of several evaluation missions and contacts in recent months and on information from ICRC delegates in the area.

The plan and its budget have been sent to governments, National Societies of the Red Cross (Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun) and to specialized agencies, seeking the financial support and material required to meet its humanitarian objectives.

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In the field, ICRC delegates have continued to work in terms of this plan.

Medical activities.—Accordingly, a medical evaluation mission in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe was carried out in August by Dr. Rémi Russbach, head of the ICRC Medical Division. During his two-week visit, Dr. Russbach gathered information on the medical problems of the civilian population, especially in combat zones, and discussed the possibilities for humanitarian action with the Red Cross and public officials.

Visits to several “protected villages”—where Africans from areas of guerrilla warfare are relocated—gave Dr. Russbach a broad view of various disturbing medical and health problems, which it is feared may worsen in the months to come. The crowding together of people, exceptional in these rural areas, brings with it risks of epidemics, especially among children. Signs of malnutrition are already apparent. The problems are complicated by the shortage of health-care personnel and means of transport, due to the prevailing insecurity.

Following Dr. Russbach’s mission, the ICRC therefore plans to send a mobile medical team, consisting of a doctor and a nurse, who will be based in Salisbury, to visit the “protected villages” and to supervise the activities of young first-aid workers at Red Cross posts. The local Red Cross, with encouragement and financial assistance from the ICRC, organized courses in basic health care this summer for these young African volunteers.

With regard to relief, an initial amount of 107,000 Swiss francs was appropriated from the ad hoc budget to set up a programme for the distribution of food and medicine in “protected villages” in the Mtoko and Mudzi districts in the northeastern part of the country where the situation is especially bad.

Protection. — Both in Geneva and in Africa, numerous contacts have been made between ICRC delegates and representatives of various parties involved in the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. These talks form part of the efforts made by the ICRC in recent months to assure respect by all parties for the principles of humanitarian law.

Information mission. — Miss Michèle Mercier, ICRC press representative, accompanied Dr Russbach on his evaluation mission. She also traveled to *Botswana*, where she visited two refugee camps to which the ICRC—through the intermediary of the National Red Cross—makes a small contribution as a supplement to the relief action conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Information gathered by Miss Mercier will be used as the basis for a memorandum to governments and National Societies which may contribute to the ICRC’s plan of action for southern Africa.

Republic of South Africa

Visit to South West Africa/Namibia. — In the second half of July the ICRC delegate in South Africa, Mr. D. Dufour, went to South-West

Africa/Namibia to visit camps of refugees from Angola and study the feasibility of providing them with some relief supplies. Mr Dufour had meetings with the local branch of the South African Red Cross with this purpose in view.

Visit to prisoners of war. — On 4 August the ICRC delegate in South Africa visited in Pretoria three Cuban POW's in South African hands. The previous ICRC visit was in April 1977.

East Africa

Ogaden conflict

As a result of the intensification of the fighting in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, the ICRC, in August, approached the parties to the conflict on behalf of the civilian and military victims. In this connection, the ICRC instructed its two regional delegates based in Nairobi, Mr. J.-F. Borel and Mr. U. Bedert, to take appropriate measures.

Mr. Borel arrived in Addis Ababa on 2 August to offer the ICRC's services to the Ethiopian Government and to request it to apply the Geneva Conventions. Mr. Borel was received on 6 August by Lt.-Col. Atnafu Abate, Vice-President of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, and on 10 August by Mr. Ayalew Mengedro, Minister of Defence, both of whom accepted the offer of ICRC services.

Mr. Bedert went to Mogadishu to meet the other parties to the conflict, to consider the possibilities for protection and assistance.

After their return to Nairobi in mid-August, the two delegates prepared consignments of the most urgently needed medical supplies, for the Ethiopian Red Cross and the Somali Red Crescent respectively. The consignments, consisting of dried plasma, dressings, antibiotics, etc., were worth a total of 30,000 Swiss francs.

At the end of August, Mr. Borel and Mr. Bedert returned to Addis Ababa and Mogadishu respectively and then entered the combat zones to estimate further humanitarian needs.

After the completion of these missions, the ICRC launched an appeal on 9 September to governments, National Societies and specialized agencies, requesting material support for its emergency action on behalf of the civilian and military victims of the Ogaden conflict. The cost of the initial phase of this action was estimated at 3.6 million Swiss francs.

Based on the reports of its delegates, the ICRC drew up a list of the priority requirements for the war wounded and for the tens of thousands of persons displaced by the hostilities on both sides.

On the Ethiopian side, emergency supplies are needed for the hospitals in the Dire Dawa area, which are caring for hundreds of wounded. The cost of a second consignment—the first having been sent on 18 August—is estimated at 110,000 Swiss francs for six tons of supplies. Assistance is needed for an estimated 50,000 displaced persons, now in towns along the Addis Ababa-Dire Dawa-Harrar road in the provinces of Bale and Sidamo. The greatest needs are for blankets, mattresses, tents and protein-enriched foods.

In Ogaden, tens of thousands of displaced persons—especially women, children and old people—are in urgent need of help. It is planned to send them immediately 30,000 blankets, 200 tons of grain, 170 tons of milk and 48 tons of oil. Six tons of supplies worth 110,000 Swiss francs are being prepared for dispatch by air, to follow an initial consignment sent on 20 August.

In view of the magnitude of the needs and the necessity for quick action, the ICRC, which is working in close co-operation with the competent authorities, intends to reinforce its present structure by sending to each side a doctor and a delegate to head relief work. Their task will be to make a detailed evaluation of the needs.

Djibouti

From 13 to 20 July, Mr. J.-F. Borel, the regional delegate for East Africa, was in Djibouti to establish contacts with the new authorities after Djibouti's accession to independence. He was received by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, of the Interior and of Justice, with whom he discussed the accession of the Republic of Djibouti to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the creation of a National Society. These meetings were held in a most cordial atmosphere.

Mauritania

From 29 August to 1 September 1977, two ICRC delegates, Mr. Jean de Courten and Mr. Fred Isler, were in Nouakchott, Mauritania's capital. They were received in audience by the Head of State, H. E. Mokhtar Ould Daddah, with whom all the humanitarian problems in the region were passed in review.

Latin America

Chile

In June, July and August, the ICRC's delegates and doctors in Chile continued their work in aid of the detainees and their dependents and visited 12, 16 and 8 places of detention, containing 129, 71 and 104 detainees respectively. For the same period, the money spent on aid to the detainees amounted to 6,411 dollars, while aid distributed to about a thousand needy families of detainees came to 87,919 dollars.

Argentina

The ICRC delegation in Argentina continued its material aid programme for detainees and their dependents needing assistance.

From May to September detainees received foodstuffs and medicaments to a value of 2,112 dollars, while their families received aid to a value of 4,566 dollars.

Nicaragua

From 13 to 31 July 1977 Mr. R. Chevalley, ICRC regional delegate for Central America and the Caribbean, was in Nicaragua. On 18 and 19 July he was received by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of the Interior and the Chief of National Security, and was granted authorization to visit detainees held at the disposal of the Ministry of the Interior and Security.

However, in the course of his visits on 20 and 21 July to the "Cárcel Modelo de Tititapa" and the "Central de Policía", the ICRC regional delegate, who was accompanied by the Minister of the Interior, was not allowed to talk with the detainees, contrary to customary procedure in the prisons visited by ICRC delegates. Because of this restrictive measure the ICRC could not ascertain the conditions of detention and, consequently, was unable to draw up reports on the visits.

Belize

In August Mr. R. Chevalley went to Belize to get in contact with the authorities and the local Red Cross.

Uruguay

The regional delegate for the southern part ("Cono Sur") of South America, Mr. Rolf Jenny, was in Uruguay from 11 to 13 July. In an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the possibility of the resumption of ICRC activities in Uruguay was among the questions raised.

Peru

Since 20 August, two ICRC delegates, Mr. L. Isler and Dr. A. Cadotsch, have been in Peru on a series of visits to places of detention. They went to three places of detention in and near Lima, where they saw altogether seventy persons imprisoned for political reasons or offences. The mission extended to the provinces, particularly in the north, where the delegates visited on 5, 6 and 7 September the "Colonia penal agricola El Sepa (Copaes)", on the banks of the Urubambo River. In this place, they saw 250 detainees, with whom they spoke without witnesses, as also in the other places of detention visited.

Asia

The departure on 10 September 1977 of 152 foreigners from Viet Nam, on board an aircraft on charter to the ICRC, was the last of the latest series of repatriation flights from Ho Chi Minh City, organized by the ICRC.

This series of flights enabled 469 foreigners, former residents in Viet Nam, to leave and join their families in Taiwan. Since 1975, the ICRC has flown more than 3,600 foreigners from Viet Nam to their own countries (India, Pakistan, Yemen, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Taiwan).

Long and complicated negotiations had to be concluded with the authorities in the countries concerned before any of the flights could take place.

Thailand

A gift of 365 tons of powdered milk, which the European Economic Community (EEC) has handed over to the ICRC, is to be distributed in

camps housing Indo-Chinese refugees in Thailand. Various charity organizations in Thailand will distribute this milk which should cover the needs of refugee children for about a year.

Visits to detainees. — From 4 to 8 August ICRC delegates in Thailand visited twelve police stations in south-east Thailand, where 37 refugees from Indo-China were being held on charges of entering the country illegally, and distributed relief supplies to them. From 11 to 18 August they also visited eighteen places of detention in the north and east and saw 1,103 refugees arrested for the same reason.

Malaysia

The ICRC regional delegate for South East Asia, Mr. A. Pasquier, and Mr. F. Robadey, delegate, were in July in Malaysia. They visited four places of detention, where they saw 686 detainees imprisoned for political reasons or offences.

Afghanistan

Since 28 August, Mr. Dominique Borel, the ICRC's regional delegate stationed in New Delhi, has been in Afghanistan on a visit to the National Society and the authorities. One of the subjects under discussion concerns the translation and printing of the school textbook adapted to Afghanistan customs.

Middle East

Lebanon

Last summer, two tasks in Lebanon were high on the list of ICRC activities: one was assistance to victims of the fighting in southern Lebanon, the other was the provision of equipment for disabled persons.

The combats in southern Lebanon, of almost daily occurrence, leading to an emergency situation in many villages and causing the flight of several thousand civilians, have obliged the ICRC to step up its relief operations and to increase its staff in Tyre. The ICRC's office, which contained four delegates, now has a staff of ten persons, including a doctor and a female nurse.

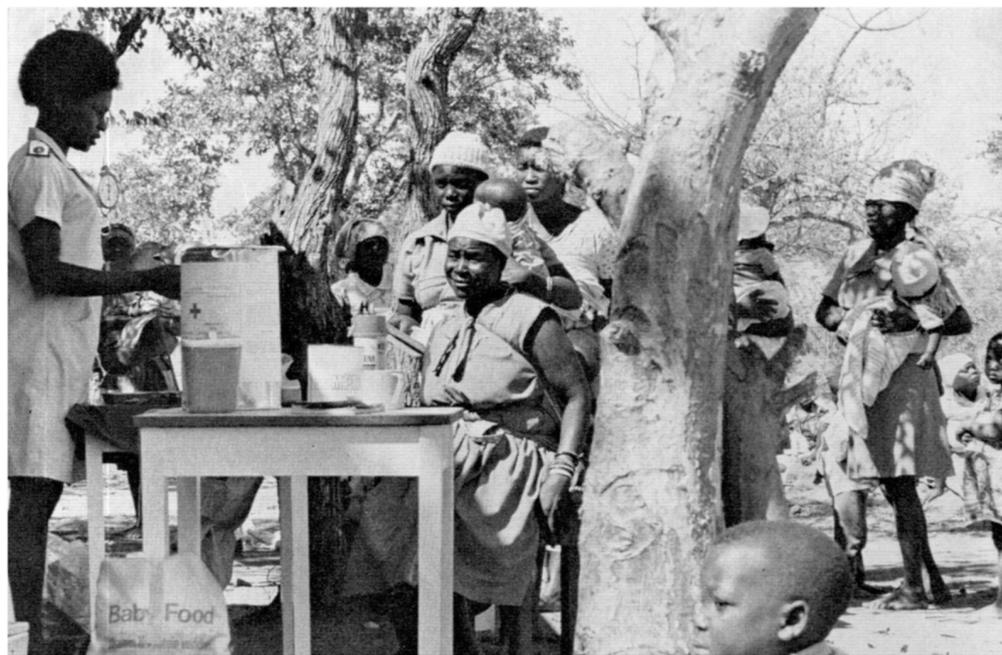


Mr. A. Hay, ICRC President, at the International Tracing Service, Arolsen (centre, Mr. Hay, on his right Mr. A. de Cocatrix, ITS Director; on his left Mr. Ph. Züger, Assistant Director; extreme left, Mr. E. Regenass, Director of Finance and Administration of the ICRC, Geneva).

Photo ITS

Distribution by Botswana Red Cross in a "protected village" of milk donated by ICRC.

Photo Mercier / ICRC





Japan: In the presence of H.M. the Emperor and members of the Imperial Family, H.M. the Empress, President of Honour of the Japanese Red Cross, presenting the Florence Nightingale Medal to Japanese medalists during a ceremony on 26 May 1977.

Photo Japanese Red Cross

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MEDALS



Federal Republic of Germany: Frau Oberin H. Stoltenhoff receives the Florence Nightingale Medal in the presence of Mr. Bargatzky, President of the National Red Cross Society.

Photo H. Bode, Bonn

Although the Lebanese Office for Social Development (ODS) has been operational in southern Lebanon from 1 August, the ICRC is still the only organization active in the southernmost sector. Its relief convoys bring supplies regularly to some forty-five villages along the border, cut off from the rest of the country because of the fighting. The ICRC also brings medicines and minor surgical material to eighty-six dispensaries in the area.

After the latest fighting, about 14,000 displaced persons moved into the area around Tyre during the last few weeks. The ICRC at once collaborated with the ODS in making emergency distributions to them.

Programmes started last spring by the ICRC to equip the disabled are being continued. The team of Swiss Red Cross specialists, who went to Lebanon at the beginning of July, is now working in the paraplegics centre at Beit Chebab, and will stay for a year re-educating patients. It will also take over the centre's artificial limb workshop. Dutch prosthetists are continuing their work equipping amputees in West Beirut and are going to the Tripoli area in September to fit about a hundred recently registered patients. A British Red Cross team, consisting of a physiotherapist, four prosthetists and a co-ordinator, will be going to Lebanon in September to equip a further 253 amputees (estimated cost, 400,000 Swiss francs). Plans are under consideration for the specialist who provided 267 persons with artificial eyes in March 1977 to return to Lebanon for a second session.

The head of the ICRC Medical Division, Dr. Rémi Russbach, went to Lebanon in June to ascertain what was the position regarding the various programmes for disabled persons and to transmit the case-files to the Lebanese Government or to other bodies, which will resume in a few months, or which have already resumed, the work begun by the ICRC. The Lebanese Medical Aid Sub-Commission has requested the ICRC to send a specialist to draw up a full report on paraplegics in Lebanon.

In Geneva the ICRC has prepared an estimate of the costs for its Lebanon operations from the beginning of September to the end of December 1977, amounting to 3.1 million Swiss francs. During the first six months of 1977, the ICRC sent to Lebanon 6,121 tons of relief supplies to a value of 26.8 million Swiss francs.

Arab Republic of Egypt

Repatriation of mortal remains. — On the initiative of the Egyptian authorities, the mortal remains of 19 Israeli soldiers killed in action

during the 1973 war and recently discovered on the east bank of the Suez Canal were repatriated on 19 July.

This operation was conducted under the auspices of the ICRC at El Khirba (Sinai) in the United Nations buffer zone.

Israel and occupied territories

Students go home for their holidays. — As in previous years, in the summer, the ICRC this year again made arrangements for students from Gaza and Sinai studying in Cairo and those from the occupied territory of Golan studying in Damascus to return to their homes for the summer vacation.

Fourteen transfer operations were organized in the United Nations buffer zone between 22 June and 27 July enabling a total of 6,260 students registered in Cairo universities to visit their families. In August, 2,931 students returned to Cairo in seven similar operations, to continue their studies. The return of students to Cairo universities was pursued throughout September.

At Quneitra, twelve Syrian students from the occupied Golan Heights crossed the border on 16 June, on their way to Damascus to commence their university studies. This was the first time that a party of Syrian students in occupied territory were authorized by the Israel authorities to go to a Syrian university. On 21 July, thirteen students from Gaza, registered at Damascus University, went home to see their families during the summer. They returned to the University on 30 August.

Medical mission. — A medical survey of the occupied territories was begun on 14 March by Dr. Franz Altherr, ICRC medical delegate, and concluded at the end of July. Dr. Altherr went to the Gaza Strip, Sinai and the West Bank to investigate the health and medical conditions of the civilian Arab population, as he had done in previous years.

Jordan

In June, July and August, the ICRC delegates in Jordan had to deal with several cases of civilians to be transferred between Jordan and Israel-occupied territories. In June, the ICRC transferred to Jordan a detainee who had been released by the Israeli authorities and repatriated an Israeli civilian who had been arrested in April in Aqaba.

In July, two nationals of the occupied territories were transferred to Jordan by the ICRC, and in August an Arab civilian released by the Israeli authorities was transferred to Amman.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 9 August two Arab detainees, released by the Israeli authorities, crossed the border into the Syrian Arab Republic, under ICRC auspices. The crossing took place at Quneitra.
