

TWO APPEALS BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

For the Victims of the Conflict in South-East Asia

On 25 May 1971, the International Committee launched the following appeal to National Red Cross Societies:

During the past few years, several appeals have been made for assistance to the various countries affected by the war in South-East Asia: Laos—January 1968; Vietnam—February 1968; Laos—April 1970; Cambodia—June 1970. In view of the permanent state of war which exists throughout Indochina, and in view of the infinite suffering resulting therefrom, the International Committee of the Red Cross is today making a general appeal to the generosity of National Societies, calling on them to come to the aid of all the victims of the conflict, regardless of political or ideological affinities.

The following details give some ideas of the immensity of the problems and requirements of the various countries involved in the Indochina conflict.

I. VIETNAM

1. Republic of Vietnam

The ICRC wishes to expand its activities in several fields and especially those concerning:

- a) *prisoners of war*: medical aid and improvement in nutrition;
- b) *civilian detainees*: medical aid, babyfood, soap, orthopaedic supplies;
- c) *social work*: in hospitals, orphanages and homes for stray children, and assistance to paraplegics.

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Despite the considerable efforts already made, there are still vast requirements to be met and a greater contribution from the ICRC would help to relieve the present hardship.

2. Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam

In accordance with past practice, the ICRC wishes to send relief to the PRGRSV.

3. Democratic Republic of Vietnam

Two field hospitals (worth a total of nearly 2 million Swiss francs) have already been sent to Hanoi. This help was greatly appreciated and the ICRC would like to send more aid.

II. CAMBODIA

1. Khmer Republic

Since the joint League-ICRC appeal of 8 June 1970, the war has continued and many urgent requests have reached us throughout the year, both from our delegates and from the Khmer Red Cross. These requests are mainly for medical and surgical supplies. Despite the considerable gifts received by the Khmer Red Cross, vast needs remain to be met. Lists of medicaments essential for the continuation of the activities of the National Red Cross reached us just recently.

2. The Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia

The ICRC despatched a quantity of medicaments at the beginning of the year and this was much appreciated. Now the RGNUC has sent the ICRC another, fairly long, list of medicaments, surgical supplies and diagnosis instruments.

III. LAOS

1. Royal Government of Laos

Since the appeal made by the ICRC on behalf of the civilian populations in April 1970, the refugee situation has continued to

give cause for considerable concern. Our delegate in Laos informed us, for example, of the arrival of 12,000 new refugees in the town of Luang-Prabang alone. It was possible to put some up in schools, but most of them have been assembled on the sand-banks along the Mekong River. The ICRC has already made on-the-spot purchases of top priority supplies to a value of US \$ 11,000.

The most urgent requirements are:

- a) *foodstuffs*: manpa (fish sauce), dried pimentos, dried fish;
- b) *clothing*: sarongs for the men and sinhs for the women.

These refugees also need medical attention and the ICRC delegate has, on many occasions, distributed vitamins, anti-malarial and analgetic drugs.

2. Pathet Lao

Here, too, medical aid must be given. As a result of increased fighting, the people need more medical help.

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This list is not complete. It only gives a partial idea of the needs of the communities suffering from the effects of the war. It does not take into account the needs of those refugees and displaced persons who are receiving help from the League of Red Cross Societies through one or other of the above-mentioned National Societies. In turning to the National Societies, the ICRC most sincerely hopes to obtain the essential backing which will enable it to successfully carry out a humanitarian task which is becoming ever more necessary.

National Societies are invited to inform the ICRC of the contributions that they would be able to make available in response to this appeal.

Transport of supplies to the above-mentioned countries is both costly and time-consuming. That is why the ICRC takes the liberty of urging National Societies to make their contributions preferably in cash¹. In fact the most rational way of furnishing aid to these

¹ Donations should be sent to the ICRC account at the Swiss Bank Corporation, Geneva, with the mention « Indochina ». However, should a National Society wish to make a gift to a special beneficiary, it should mention the fact.

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countries is often to buy supplies on the spot. When this is possible, not only is there considerable saving in time, but the people receive local goods with which they are familiar.

The ICRC recommends that any Society wishing to make its contribution in kind should first contact our Relief Service, which will supply all necessary information.

Reports on the use to which donations are put will be regularly prepared for the information of the donors. The ICRC is relying on the generous support of National Societies to help it in successfully implementing this ambitious relief programme, and would like to thank beforehand all those kind enough to rally to this call.

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For the Benefit of Victims of the Events in Ceylon

On 18 June 1971, the International Committee also appealed in the following terms to various National Societies :

The International Committee of the Red Cross despatched, on 26 April, a delegate to Ceylon, to enquire into the needs to be provided for following the recent events there. On the basis of the reports received in Geneva, it has been decided to carry out a relief action for the benefit of some 15,000 detainees. As a preliminary measure of assistance, the ICRC has advanced the sum of 40,000 Swiss Francs.

The action in view consists essentially in supplying garments and clothing material for these detainees. Various tools and equipment for their rehabilitation are also included in the requests for aid.

The International Committee of the Red Cross ventures to approach your Society in order to find out how far it would be possible for it to participate in this humanitarian action, and takes the liberty of urging National Societies to contribute, preferably, in cash.¹

For those National Societies wishing to give contributions in kind, detailed lists of the supplies needed are available. National

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Societies are earnestly recommended to get in touch with Geneva before despatching relief of any sort.

The ICRC extends in advance its thanks to all Societies responding generously to this appeal.

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Further to this appeal, the ICRC sent National Societies on 25 June 1971 a list of medicaments, dressing material and surgical equipment which the Ceylon Red Cross needs most urgently.